

The Problem of Minorities

OR COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION
IN INDIA

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WOKING

To
my friends in U.S.A. who have enabled
me to write this book at Harvard

Preface

THIS book is the outcome of my studies at Harvard University during the years 1930-7. In 1930, Rupert Emerson, Associate Professor of Government at Harvard, spoke to a group of Indian students there on "The Dangers of Indian Nationalism." Impressed by this, I wrote an essay on the very same topic for one of his courses. It subsequently developed into an essay on "The Problem of Minorities, or, the Hindu-Moslem Problem in India." These essays and my further studies on Nationalism and Imperialism grew into a thesis on "Communal Representation in India" submitted to Harvard University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in political science. Need I say that there is not one page in this book which Rupert Emerson did not criticize. He is the most formidable critic of my work at Harvard, and I am very much indebted to him.

The thesis was written in the spring of 1935. Since then it has been continually revised and rewritten. Upon my arrival in London in February 1938, it was further revised and rewritten. In so doing I took advantage of the material I could find at the India Office Library, the Colonial Office Library, British Museum, the India League, and other organizations. The book, as it stands now, is the outcome of all this work.

It is difficult to write contemporary history, particularly the present phase of the struggle. I sketched it as faithfully as I could. The analysis in this book is against the system. The characters who appear in this book are treated as personifications of the economic, political, religious, and social relations that exist between them. "You cannot knock out the idea of communalism out of the heads of the communalists, unless you knock out the system." This is the temper of the book.

I thank all the readers both in United States of America and here who read this book and offered their criticisms. They are innumerable. It is not necessary to mention their names. They understand. The book is dedicated to my friends in United States of America who enabled me to write this book. I must


particularly thank Punkı who shared my turbulent days at Harvard, and who gave shape and organization to this work. The finishing of this work in London would not have been possible had it not been for the generous help and interest of my friends, Miss Edith M. Hale, Professor Norton A. Kent, George Lloyd, Henry Bach, and Joseph Brattman. I must also thank several other friends, especially Miss Cissie Bach and Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Young, for their genuine interest in the publication of this book.

I feel that a book of this kind may contain several mistakes. But, as J. B. S. Haldane writes, "A Marxist must not be too afraid of making mistakes." I hope the readers will point out the mistakes and offer constructive criticism.

K B KRISHNA

LONDON,

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Introduction

I

What is the Problem of Minorities in India?

THE problem of minorities in India is officially known as the problem of communal representation. Representation to the Councils, recruitment to the public services, and appointment of members to committees and commissions is on the basis of religion, or "religious groups," "interests," and classes. In 1909, when communal representation came into being it was, and is even today, known as the Hindu Moslem problem. As Lord Morley wrote, it was the speech of Minto about the extra claims of the Moslems that first started the Moslem hare. Later, when representation to the Councils on religious lines was extended to other religious groups, it was, and is, known as the communal or minority problem. These religious groups are considered to be minorities in relation to Hindus who are numerically larger than any other religious group in India. Excepting Hindus, everyone else is regarded as a minority. Representation to the Councils is even extended to other than religious groups, for instance, to interests and classes. These include Anglo-Indians, British commercial community, Labour, landlords, and others. In a book called *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, the following are enumerated as "minority communities," namely, the Sikhs, the Depressed Classes, the British commercial community, the Anglo-Indians, and Indian Christians. This defies classification in that it includes "religious groups," "interests," and "classes" together. Excluding "interests and classes," minorities or communities, in the language of the Government of India, mean mostly religious groups. The official theory of "communities, classes, and interests" is examined in detail in this book.

It is customary to speak of 'racial, religious, and linguistic minorities.' The League treaties and declarations speak of "persons belonging to racial, religious, and linguistic minori-

ties" or of "inhabitants of a country who differ from the majority of the population in race, language, and religion."¹

What is a racial minority? What is a race?² It is another mystical political term which means anything. It is a personal matter resting largely on "subjective impressions." Contemporary German fascism has raised it to an absurd science. Huxley and Haddon suggest that the use of the word "race" should be abolished from the scientific dictionary. At best modern anthropologists prefer "mixed ethnic groups" to "race." In India linguistic terms such as Dravidian and Aryan have been applied to ethnic units. In the opinion of a German anthropologist, Von Eickstedt, there are no Aryans and Dravidians, though there are Aryan and Dravidian languages and cultural usages.³ A writer has likened India to a net collecting in its great peninsula the flotsam and jetsam of all Asia.⁴ India is aptly called an ethnic pageant. Risley's ethnic classification of India is now out of date.⁵ The report of the census of India (1931) discusses the various classifications and comes to the conclusion that there are several mixed ethnic groups, changing at each epoch of Indian history.⁶

Long before the so-called "Aryan" invasion of India, it is believed that the population of Mohenjo-Daro included at least four ethnic types.⁷ When such was the case at that remote time, around 2000 B.C., it is ridiculous to think of any pure "racial types" after repeated invasions from the north. The

¹ Treaty of Versailles, Arts 86 and 91, quoted in C. A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, London, 1934, p. 4. The Belgian-Swiss-American Commission's Report of 1921 speaks of "minorities either of language or of religion."

² For various uses of the term race, see J. S. Huxley and A. C. Haddon, *We Europeans*, London, 1934, pp. 262-63.

³ For Eickstedt's classification, see H. G. Rawlinson, *India: a Short Cultural History*, London, 1937, pp. 9-13.

⁴ *Census of India*, 1931, vol. 1, p. 440.

⁵ Sir H. Risley, *The People of India* (second edition), edited by W. Crooke, Calcutta, 1915, pp. 33-34.

⁶ *Census of India*, 1931, vol. 1, pp. 439-60.

⁷ John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilisation*, London, 1931, vol. 1, p. 108. This conclusion was based on the researches of Guha and Sewall. See *ibid.*, vol. 11, chapter xxx, p. 638. The four ethnic types are (1) Proto-Australoid, (2) Mediterranean, (3) Mongolian Branch of Alpine Stock, (4) Alpine.

mingling and commingling of ethnic types is a settled fact. Today India is peopled by a large number of ethnic groups in every stage of development.

It is therefore difficult to understand what a racial minority is, unless it means national minority. A national minority is formed from a mixture of several races. It is impossible to conceive of frontiers that are coterminous with nations and without national minorities. Hungary, Poland, Roumania, and Italy have national minorities in their frontiers. When we come to discuss the question of communities later in the book we note several nations, tribes, and, under existing boundaries, national minorities in India. ☺

What is a "religious minority"? To speak of a religious minority is to split a nation or a national minority into the various religions professed by the nation or national minority. It is something like dividing the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia according to the religions professed by that minority. If we divide India according to religions we will have Hindus, Aryas, Sikhs, Jams, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Moslems, Christians, Jews, tribal and other religious groups. Would these be considered religious minorities in relation to British imperialism irrespective of the proportionate numerical differences? Would Hindus, who are numerically larger than any other religious groups, be considered a religious minority? Or would other religious groups be considered religious minorities in comparison with the Hindus? In that case every country has religious minorities in the sense that where Catholics dominate in one place the Protestants and others of that place will be a religious minority and vice versa. Religion is not a lasting and permanent factor. "Petrified religious rites and fading psychological relics" are modified by "the living social, economic, and cultural environment" that surrounds them. We will discuss more of this in part four of this book.

What is a "linguistic minority"? It is also inconceivable to think of a linguistic minority which is not at the same time a national minority. Not that "all who speak one language necessarily constitute one nation. There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there may not be two nations speaking the

same language Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation ¹

If India were divided according to languages and dialects we should have two hundred and twenty-five linguistic groups ² Would these two hundred and twenty-five groups be considered "linguistic" minorities? Are they minorities in relation to British imperialism or in relation to the numerically preponderant linguistic group? Would not this division overlap with the religious group? Hindus speak various languages This classification would again be splitting the religious groups into linguistic groups or linguistic groups into religious ones.

If India were divided according to so-called race, language, and religion, the division overlaps one another The use of the terms "linguistic" and "religious" minorities is loose While a national minority may speak one language at a time, it professes several religions

What then is India? India is a land of nations and tribes, peopled by a large number of ethnic groups in every stage of development from the aboriginal groups to the highly cultured groups, speaking diverse languages, professing diverse religions It is at present a colony of British imperialism It is not a sovereign state. It is politically a minority, an immense numerical majority ruled by a microscopic numerical minority. Imperialism is the exploiter, and India the exploited Under this condition what is the problem of minorities in India?

"What is it that particularly agitates a national minority? A minority is discontented because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language" Imperialism is a hindrance to the development of the Indian languages and cultures The political weight is in favour of English In this respect the whole of India is in the position of a minority Its languages, although permitted to be used, suffer from the general reaction of imperialism

"A minority is discontented . . . because it does not possess its own schools" There are more English universities and

¹ J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 6

² Compare previous estimate Sir G. A. Grierson, *The Linguistic Survey of India and the Census of 1911*, Calcutta, 1919, pp. 2, 3 According to the census of 1911, there are 170 languages and 68 dialects According to the linguistic survey, there are 179 languages and 544 dialects

schools than Indian ones. Here also the whole of India is a minority. While it has schools of its own, they are limited under conditions of imperialism.

'A minority is discontented because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience and liberty of movement.' In this respect the whole of India is a minority. Hindu and Moslem, Sikh and Christian, all alike are denied civil liberties. Indians are slaves in their own land. All alike were and can be imprisoned without a trial. Press Acts, Arms Acts, Defence of the Realm Acts all deny freedom of speech and thought to the Indians. All alike are exploited. Under these conditions, what is the problem of minorities in India?

The word "minority" means anything from a "religious group to a class or "interest." It is a term invented to further the interests of British imperialism and certain sections of the backward professional classes in India. A minority, in order to be called such, must satisfy certain requirements of imperialism. It must not be a disloyal element. It must not be seditious. It must be moderate, nay even reactionary. It must be amenable to flattery. The more the minority possesses these qualifications the more is its political importance enhanced. The need of British imperialism for these minorities depends upon the strength and growth of the more important politically dominant classes. A minority is an indispensable nucleus in the mechanism of "counterpoise of natives against natives."¹ These are the necessary requirements demanded by imperialism for any religious group, class, or interest to be called a minority.

On the other side a minority is usually a backward element. It is a banner raised by the lower ranks against the few placed above them. It complains incessantly of its relatively backward position. It humbly petitions the Government to redress the balance by giving it more posts in the higher ranks of the services. It crawls on its belly for protection, as Montagu used to say. It cries, as Lord Curzon said, "for artificial ropes and pulleys to haul them up."² It takes advantage of its religion.

✓¹ This phrase was used by the Punjab Army Reorganization Committee in 1858 quoted in G. T. Garratt, *An Indian Commentary* London, 1930, p. 202.

✓² Quoted in G. N. Singh, *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development 1600-1919* Benares, 1933 pp. 375-76

It paints its imaginary grievances in lurid colours. With bated breath and humbling whisperingness it declares its unalloyed loyalty to the Government.

A minority in India today means a rising backward professional class, belonging to one of the various faiths and communities that demands a share in the government. It may be anything that the Government needs to counter the aims of the dominant political classes. King George V said at the opening of the first session of the Round Table Conference on November 12, 1930. "I have also in my mind the just claims of majorities and minorities, of men and women, of town dwellers and tillers of the soil, or landlords and tenants, of the strong and the weak, of the rich and poor, of the races, castes, and creeds of which the body politic is composed . . ." This can be taken as a sample of what minorities are according to British imperialism.

Under these circumstances, where the common oppressor and exploiter is imperialism, where no one particular group, class, or interest is oppressed by another, what is the problem of minorities in India?

Mahmud Ahmad spoke abstractly of the causes of friction between the majorities and the minorities.¹ We do not know what those majorities and minorities are. Consequently the probable causes of friction are in the imagination rather than in reality. He has not shown concretely who is oppressed and who is hurt. The alleged friction is a myth. But the social significance of this myth and its role in Indian history are not denied. They are analysed in this book.

What is a myth? A myth is a desire, an ideological political attitude mistaken for objective reality. It is a mental construction chosen by those participating in a movement assuring themselves of victory and believing that their cause is certain to triumph. The alleged grievances of an abstract minority against an abstract majority are myths. But they are adopted just the same by a class that needs such myths. Concerning myths, Sorel wrote: "I now wish to show that we should not analyse such groups of images in the way that we analyse a

¹ Mahmud Ahmad, *The Nehru Report and Muslim Rights*, Calcutta, 1930, p 58

thing into its elements, but that they must be taken as a whole as historical forces, and that we should be especially careful not to make any comparison between accomplished fact and the picture people had formed for themselves before action.¹

This is exactly what the theorists of minorities in India say. In this book, these images are analysed into their elements, we endeavour to compare realities with the pictures that these theorists of minorities draw. We find that they are ideological political desires that have no basis in facts but in class interests.

(But this does not mean that grievances of certain classes against certain others under imperialism are myths. They are real. For instance, the grievances of the Depressed Classes against the Hindus are real. The grievances of peasants against landlords are real. The grievances of the backward professional classes are real. What these classes fail to understand is that their grievances are due to the socio-economic basis of the country, and not due to the fact that they are a majority or a minority. What they fail to realize is that these are accentuated under imperialism by its political policy. The State in India is an imperialist State. It is an alien State. Hence it has no direct interest in those affairs that do not affect imperial interests.⁽²⁾ Nominally it declares that it does not interfere in the social and religious affairs of its subjects. The Depressed Classes, in order to have their grievances redressed, must have political power to do away with them. But political power is in the hands of the imperialists. The social and religious oppressors are Hindus. The neutral role of the imperialist State is in reality a negative support for the Hindu oppressors. Social evils cannot be removed except when felt by a particular class, and when that class attains enough political power to remove those evils. Absence of government by the Indians for the Indians is the major cause for the prevalence of many social evils in India today. The need to remove them is now felt by several classes, but they have not a Government of their own. The Sarda Act is a classic instance. It is not at all enforced. The imperialist State is an onlooker. It negatively helps the evils to exist. It encourages the social oppressors to continue

¹ Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, translated by T. E. Hulme. London, 1916, p. 22. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

their old putrid regime. Hence it is incorrect to say that the Indians alone are to be blamed for the existence of many social evils.¹ Under imperialism the self-evolving institutions have become self-destructive ones. It is, as Montagu said, denial of responsibility, absence of government by the Indians for the Indians, and the presence of imperialism that are responsible for this. In this light the grievances of the Depressed Classes, though they are directed against the Hindu oppressors, are in reality grievances against imperialism in so far as it does not allow the contending classes to settle their differences one way or the other for themselves. Therefore the problem of Depressed Classes is also a problem of anti-imperialism.

(In the economic sphere, even under imperialism, the grievances of the peasants against the landlords, of the borrowers against moneylenders, of the workers against the capitalists are real and not myths. But the veiled alliance between the landlord, the moneylender, the industrialist, and the imperialist forces reduces the problem again to anti-imperialism. But on different issues the interests of the landlords, industrialists, and moneylenders are not always identical with those of imperialism. Hence, broadly speaking, the whole of India is politically a minority.)

What then is the problem of minorities in India? It is as we stated in the beginning, *part of the problem of communal representation*

¹ For views of this type, see Vera Anstey, *Economic Development of India*, chapters 1, 3, 17. The assumption is evident that Indians are to be blamed for the evils. What can they do as they are now?

Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia—A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York, 1937, pp. 34-35, “and as in India they seek always to find someone else on whom to blame their troubles without taking them as their own responsibility as the Chinese do”

Statement of the Problem

"All the Conferences in the world," wrote Lord Birkenhead,¹ 'cannot bridge the unbridgeable.' The unbridgeable, according to him, is the problem of communal representation in India. Bhagawan Das represents a different view. He characterizes the problem as "an ethical-psychological religious disease."² The one is an imperialist, the other a theosophist. Between these two views lie several intermediate ones which are dealt with in this book at the proper places. Which view is correct? Is the problem of communal representation really unbridgeable? Is it a disease? Is it something else? What are the causes that contribute to the rise of this problem? Is it accidental? Was it unavoidable when it came into existence? These are some of the typical questions analysed and answered in this book.

The problem is studied in its development. Due regard is paid both to the Indian social economy and British imperialism. In one sense, to speak of British imperialism as a separate entity from the present Indian social economy is a misnomer, as it is at present part of it. But for the purpose of analysis the two are treated separately, showing the necessary relationships between them. The problem of communal representation is one aspect of such relationships. This book does not deal with the entire relationship. There are other aspects of British policy and Indian social economy that are not dealt with in this book as they do not touch the present main problem.

Since the problem is dealt with in its development, the historical aspects of the relationship between British imperialism and Indian social economy, and the essential elements in the development of the problem are given much prominence.

✓¹ This was written by Lord Birkenhead when he was Secretary of State for India to Lord Reading, the then Viceroy of India. Earl of Birkenhead, *Frederick Edwin Earl of Birkenhead the Last Phase*, London, 1935, p. 246.

✓² Bhagawan Das, *Communalism and its cure by Theosophy* p. 53

This means a taking into account of the organization of British policy and of the corresponding rise of some aspects of social economy. This is fully done in the book. In this background the problem of communal representation is a part of the general struggle of Indian social economy, represented by the professional and industrialist classes and their allies, not of the entire social economy but part of it, against British imperialism and amongst themselves. It is also a part of the general struggle of British imperialism against these classes. In other words, the problem of communal representation is the history of war between these classes. On the part of the British it is a history of concessions, counterpoise, coercion, and strengthening of paramountcy. On the part of the professional and the industrialist classes and their allies it is a history of their political consciousness as evidenced by the growth of their organizations and demands. It is also a history of struggles among themselves.

The class struggle is a fact. It is even a factor in historical evolution. Machiavelli thought that the centuries of struggle in Florence between the commune and the popolo, the grandi and the arti, contributed a great deal to the development and prosperity of the republic.¹ This is also true of India before and after the consolidation of British rule in a limited manner. Revolutions, which are culminations of class struggles, did not arise successfully under British rule. But every struggle against imperialism since the Mutiny strengthened the political consciousness and organization of the classes and the masses. The present obstacles to the logical culmination of class struggles into a revolution, led the classes to the utilization of the situation, circumscribed by imperial interests. To this extent, the history of the struggles of the professional and industrialist classes among themselves and against the British represents a phase of development historically conditioned and limited. At the present time the limited field for the vent of the ambitions of those classes is exhausted, and the move in India today is one of an all-India anti-imperialist front. This aspect

¹ Voltaire was of the same opinion. *An Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations* cited below, vol. II, p. 131. "If Italy was disturbed by divisions, which sometimes are productive of public liberty . . ."

M. Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism*, 1935, p. 162 (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

of internal struggles and the limited character of development of the struggles of these classes are fully analysed in this book.

This class struggle, or the war of ideas between imperialism and the emergent professional classes, began with the Indian demand for association with the administration. The demand changed gradually from representative government, self-government within the Empire, responsible government, home rule, dominion status, and finally to complete independence. This change of the demand coincided with the advent of new classes, the capitalist classes, and the political consciousness of these classes. Demands went hand in hand with the interests of these classes at each specific stage. But from the beginning the British consistently insisted on the view that India was unfit for responsible government, while the prerequisites necessary for such fitness were always denied. Yet they always posed the problem of communal representation as a necessary link in the march to democracy. They always declared that responsible government is the ultimate goal of British policy in India. The demand of the professional and industrialist classes is objective enough. But what they actually got did not always correspond to the demand. Imperialism reduced their demand to the sounding-board of "responsible government" for the advancement of their own immediate interests. Such a course is a necessity. On the part of the British, it is to show that they are earnest in their civilizing mission of democracy. On the part of the professional and industrialist classes, the cry for democracy became a veiled demand for the recognition of their immediate interests. But since this does not emancipate the whole of society and thereby themselves, and since the pressure from the masses is great, the move is in the direction of independence. This accounts for the artificial and contradictory character of the problem. This aspect is fully analysed in this book.

From this it follows that British policy in India regarding the principle of communal representation was by no means accidental. It is a process conditioned by the socio-economic formation of the country. The Marquis of Zetland asserted that India fell accidentally to British rule. Nothing is more untrue and unhistorical. Imperial necessity plus the situation in India made the British policy always consistent, planned,

and deliberate. The doctrine of continuity aided rather than hindered this policy. Because of this non-accidental character it is not surprising that words like "counterpoise," "concession," and "strengthening of paramountcy"—expressions of non-accidental policy—should creep into the politics of the country both in theory and in practice. There is no reason to abhor these words. They are blazoned in the correspondence and official despatches of the Viceroys and Secretaries of State for India. Similarly, the phrase "loaves and fishes of office" is used. It figures largely in the documents of the professional and industrialist classes. These key words used in this book are not subjective expressions, but are used by the Britishers and Indian classes themselves. They profoundly illuminate the nature and characteristics of the problem.

If there were no people to be deceived, wrote Machiavelli, there would be no deceiver.¹ If there were no classes with conflicting interests and willing to be counterpoised, there would be no counterpoiser. Diderot phrased it more neatly. He wrote: "If men are so ready to injure one another it is only because everything conspires to give them interests. Each one, if I may say so, lives isolated in society, and their chiefs avail themselves of their divisions to subdue the whole. *Divide et impera* is the maxim that all bad Governments follow by instinct. Tyrants would be badly off if they had to rule over virtuous men only."² These theoretical observations of Machiavelli and Diderot confirm Indian history. It is precisely the existence of clashes between and among classes in India on one hand and the imperial needs on the other that gave rise to the policy of counterpoise. Here again a process is explained consciously, contrary to the view of Lord Birkenhead, who wrote that the British "alone could play the part of the composers."³ The noble lord, who contributed so much to the

¹ Machiavelli, *Prince*, translated by E. Dacres, in *Machiavelli*, with an introduction by H. Cust, vol. 1, London, 1905, p. 322.

² Diderot, *Notes to Holbach's System of Nature*, pp. 131-32.

³ Birkenhead, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-46. "The more it is made obvious that these antagonisms (variation of nationality, sect and religion) are profound, and affect immense and irreconcilable sections of the population, the more conspicuously is the fact illustrated that we, and we alone, can play the part of composers."

policy of counterpoise, should have known the difference between composer and counterpoiser

In addition to its own characteristics, British policy in India adopted the characteristics of previous despotisms—Hindu and Moslem. In this sense, it is the lineal child of Indian despotism. Speaking of the Asiatic barbarians, Voltaire remarked "Their ancestors do not deserve historical description any more than the wolves and tigers of their country" ¹ We cannot dismiss this question so lightly as Voltaire did. He was primarily interested "in the spirit, the manners and customs of the nations" ² At another place we find him interested in the effect of despotism on the spirit of the people, especially in his views on India. ³ The despotisms in India merit historical description because in the very analysis of those systems lie the means of effectively resisting those systems. In studying those systems, we observe the verification of Machiavelli's law that nations return to order unless they remain oppressed by some extraordinary power. ⁴ This is the essential trait of Indian history, the failure to return to normalcy, that is, to natural and necessary order. Any desire to restore India to normalcy and to offer a solution to the vexed problems must be accompanied by an analysis of the systems. While the previous systems do not fall within the scope of this book, the British system deserves historical description, in so far as it pertains to the communal problem. The history of British policy is inseparable from the history of communal representation

The characteristics of British policy, and those of the Indian

¹ Voltaire, *Works translated*, vols. II, III. *An Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations*, vol. II, chapter 53 p. 365

¹ Voltaire, op. cit. p. 1

* Voltaire, op cit., p 35 "The human mind has degenerated in India. This is probably an effect of the Tartar government."

Pages 48-49. It would seem as if mankind had become weak and effeminate in India, in proportion as they have been subjected. There is great appearance, that after each conquest the superstitions and the penances of these people have been increased."

Pages 49-50 It almost always happens, that he who is armed with power rivets the chains of ignorance instead of breaking them "

Page 41 and although the general goodness of their dispositions may have been corrupted by superstition and the repeated eruptions of foreignness."

¹Voltaire's observations also fully verify Machavelli's law

professional and industrialist classes—to use a fashionable phrase, their action and interaction—produced the problem of communal representation. Briefly the points advanced in this book are the following:

1. The evolution of British policy in India is on the lines of counterpoise, concession, and strengthening of paramountcy. The growth and organization of the professional and industrialist classes of various faiths and communities and their demands are on the lines of struggles amongst themselves and against the British. At the stage when the Indian National Congress, largely Hindu, was already dominant, when the Moslem professional class was just emerging into organized existence, the claim of the Moslems to separate representation was recognized as a counterpoise against the predominance of the Hindu professional classes.

2. When once this principle is in existence, it is easy to forecast the succeeding events.¹ The subsequent history of the principle is necessarily one of further evolution of British policy and extension of the principle of counterpoise to other religious communities. It is also a history of the growth of the professional classes of other faiths and their demands. The same phenomenon is observed in Ceylon and Kenya.

3. The causes of the tension between the Hindus and the Moslems are traced to the socio-economic formation of the country and lack of enforcement of law and order on the part of the British, and not to religion alone as it is often alleged.

4. Lastly, on the basis of the above conclusions communal representation is recommended for abolition.

These in brief are the views expounded and analysed in this book. The “counterpoise” idea advanced in this book explaining the origins of communal representation is, I claim, a fact. As a statement of British policy, it is found in the private correspondence of Lytton, Curzon, Minto, and Morley. The words “counter the aims of the Congress,” “counterpoise,” “concession,” “circumscribed by imperial interests” are all

¹ Compare the following observation of Voltaire “When an ancient error is established, policy uses it as a bit which the vulgar have put into their mouths, until another superstition arises to supersede it, when policy profits by the second error as it did with the first.” Title-page, *The Philosophy of History*, New York, 1898

freely used in the above correspondence. Minto's official despatch to Morley, Morley's despatch to Minto, the Government of India's memorandum in 1907 and the replies of the local Governments to that memorandum, all these use the above words freely. It is significant that all these documents express British opinion. All the men who expressed this opinion were either Viceroys or Secretaries of State for India. Therefore the statements of these people are to be regarded as facts, because they cannot speak against their own interests. But publicly it is disclaimed that the policy of the British is one of counterpoise. The statement of British policy regarding communal representation is contradictory. Which statement is to be regarded as fact? Naturally the statements which are found in official despatches and private letters have been, and ought to be, regarded as facts.

The opinions of the professional and industrialist classes on this question may not be of value because they are the interested party. It would be in accord with their sentiments to characterize British policy as one of "counterpoise." This is duly noted. The opinions of these classes are mentioned as facts not because "they are accepted by a large number of people," but also because they are verifiable by objective experience. That the policy of counterpoise is one of such facts is the contention of the Indian classes, and as such their views on this question are freely cited to add strength to the private views of the British expressed in letters and despatches. The political resolutions of these classes on this aspect of communal representation are the chief source material used in this book.

If the "policy of counterpoise" is a fact, the further implications of that fact have to be noted. The history of communal representation, on the side of the Indian classes, is analyzed as a history of struggle among themselves, just as it is analysed on the side of the British as a history of concessions, strengthening of paramountcy, and further extension of counterpoise. It is further presented with ample documentary evidence that the plea for communal representation is a veiled plea for "posts and emoluments." In India, as in every other country, when new classes have arisen to economic power, they have demanded a share in political power equivalent to their new economic

status In general, the British and the backward Indian professional and industrialist classes spoke always of this fact. The advanced classes denied it, but some, like the British, have been outspoken on this point To contradict themselves at every step is the professional disease of these classes From this it should not be inferred that the opinions of one class cited against the other have objective validity They are cited because they are significant. Like the Britisher who could not speak against himself when he spoke of the policy of counterpoise, quite truly, so also the Indian classes cannot speak against themselves when they speak of their demand being one of jobs. It is by inference of this kind that the view is advanced that the history of communal representation is also a history of the veiled plea of the Indian classes for more power, posts, and emoluments. Nothing is aimed in this as an attack on the morality of the Indian classes, but only to show that their ideological-political desires are expressions of their class interests. In support of this view, all the documents, direct and indirect, which speak of the activity of these classes, their organizations and their political resolutions are cited These cited documents are also recognized by the Indian Statutory Commission as source material.

The reports of the Commissions, official and unofficial, have to be used carefully as source material It is the same with parliamentary debates on the subject They are political, not judicial documents Now and then we get Commissions, such as those on agriculture, labour, and industry, which are to a certain extent objective This follows from the contradictory nature of the British ruling class ¹ That the findings of certain imperial commissions should be conducive to the interests of the Indians is as intelligible as the reports of the early English factory inspectors, although belonging to a different class, had been to the interests of the working class But the reports are political. This point is clearly brought out in the case of the Indian Statutory Commission One of the members of the Com-

¹ This is due to the fact that the political parties of the day in England are represented on the Commissions. In the Indian Statutory Commission three political trends were represented. See E. Cadogan, *The India We Saw*, London, 1933, p. 288

mission wrote that the publication of the first volume of the Commission's report was a political manoeuvre. It was done to prepare the minds of the readers to welcome certain moderate recommendations. When reports were written from this angle, we can understand why these are of value only as political documents. For this reason they are used in this book as unerring political statements of British policy in India.

Besides these reports, the statements of writers, Indian and English, are largely utilized. Sometimes they are used to show that a conservative writer came to rather unorthodox conclusions, sometimes, to show that even men of the opposition school also came to the same conclusions as advanced in this book. Hence the names of the writers, particularly Indian, and their background have to be noted. When a man like Gokhale, who had a reputation for character, wrote his opinion, it was of value because character and opinion coincided in that person. When a man like Chirol, who is regarded by the Nationalists as an enemy of India, writes something in favour of Indians, it is significantly noted. In some cases the opinions of experts in a particular field are utilized, especially those of Darling on rural Punjab. Above all, the opinions of those who came to the same conclusions as mine, and who did not follow the same method, are utilized. From this it must not be inferred that I have merely catalogued the opinions of others. Last, but not least, these opinions are cited because they are true and significant, and because they are politically important for immediate action.

Part I
The Origins

I

Introduction War of Ideas

WHAT is the idea of communal representation? When and how did this arise? The origins of this idea are to be sought in the growth and strength of the Indian National Congress and the need for a policy of counterpoise by the Government against the Congress

By about the beginning of the twentieth century, the Congress was growing in influence and prestige. Up to this time it was dominated by the old middle-class intelligentsia. New recruits from the professional classes and the rising industrialists swelled its ranks. With the introduction of this new element the Congress entered a phase of internal struggle with reference to political methods. This phase of internal struggle culminated at Surat in 1907 with the resultant split of the Congress into extremists and moderates. It was during this period, and after, that it was looked upon by the Government of India as a seditious body. Lord Curzon never concealed his dislike of the Indian National Congress. In 1900 he wrote to the Secretary of State

My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."¹ He believed that the Congress was not representative. In order to counteract its influence he suggested that a Council of Princes should be set up.² This idea was taken

¹ Earl of Ronaldshay *The Life of Lord Curzon*, three volumes, vol. II, p. 151

² *Cambridge Shorter History of India* p. 878. Morley wrote to Minto (August 6, 1906) "The Council of Princes has never struck me as promising. Curzon, I believe, thought of it as a device for countering the Congress." Mary Minto, *India, Minto and Morley* 1934, p. 100

Curzon in turn got this idea from Lord Lytton. Lady Betty Balfour *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876-80* compiled from official papers, 1899 pp. 107-8 "To the Viceroy this presented an opportunity of inaugurating a new policy by virtue of which the Crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sym-

by Minto as a possible counterpoise to Congress aims¹ Minto recognized the need for friendship with the best men of the Congress, but he believed that there was much that was absolutely disloyal in the movement² In order to counteract this disloyal element he had recourse to several other ideas. He writes to Lord Morley:

"Nothing was ever truer than what Morison says in the extract you send me: 'Ideas can only be combated by ideas,' and you won't keep the younger generation away from the Congress unless you have another programme and another set of ideas to set up against theirs."³

With Morley and Minto on one side and the Indian National

pathies and interests of a powerful native aristocracy To do this would, he felt, materially diminish the dangers with which the Empire of India was then threatened by the condition of affairs in Central Asia "

Lady Betty Balfour, op cit , p 109. In a letter to Disraeli on April 30, 1877, he writes "To secure completely, and efficiently utilize, the Indian aristocracy is, I am convinced, the most important problem now before us "

Ibid , p 111 " He had desired to take this opportunity to establish an Indian Privy Council, forming a distinct and separate institution, restricted, at all events in the first instance, to the great chiefs, and empowered to consult with and advise the Viceroy from time to time on general matters of State "

Ronaldshay, *Lord Curzon*, vol 11, pp 228-29 Lord Curzon freely admitted his indebtedness to Lord Lytton There were some items in Lord Lytton's programme which he rejected Lord Lytton's idea of an Indian Privy Council was examined only to be discarded

✓¹ Minto wrote to Morley (May 28, 1906) "I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes, or an elaboration of that idea, a Privy Council not only of native rulers but of a few other big men to meet say once a year for a week or a fortnight at Delhi, for instance " See Mary Minto, op. cit , p 29

Minto exploited this idea fully in his correspondence with Morley See Mary Minto, op cit , pp 153, 158, 214, 255, and *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p 878

✓² Mary Minto, op cit , p 28 Morley echoes the same ideas in his letter to Minto (June 6, 1906) "One must recognize it [Congress] as a power with which we have to deal and with whose leaders we must reckon One cannot but be anxious as to the almost universally disloyal tone of the Native Press with which they are so largely connected and the control of which they are acquiring throughout India "

Mary Minto, op cit., p 31 Minto to Morley, July 11, 1906 "I am sorry to say my doubts as to the genuineness of Congress aims I am quite prepared to recognize much that is good in their campaign, but at the same time there is much that makes one very suspicious "

✓³ Mary Minto, op cit , p 99 (July 11, 1906)

Congress on the other begins the war of ideas. The ideas were by no means new. They originated in the circumstances of British rule in India. The idea of creating a council of nobles as a counterpoise to the Congress of recognizing the claims of the educated classes to a share in the administration of the country, offsetting the advanced classes against the backward of creating classes as social bases of British rule in India, and counterpoising one against the other of distrusting and confiding in an Indian of conceding reforms without surrender of imperial interests in the midst of repression of strengthening paramountcy at every turn—all these ideas were and are today the necessary concomitants of British rule in India. A narrative of the evolution of these ideas, particularly the idea of counterpoise, which arose out of the previous schools of political thought, and which are set in opposition to the ideas of the Congress, is necessary. It is in this war of ideas between the Government and the Congress that the origins of communal representation lie. What are these schools of political thought from which evolved the policy of counterpoise?

Schools of Political Thought with Reference to British Policy in India

IN the history of British India up to Minto we find three schools of political thought

1 Metcalfe, taking into account the prevailing feelings of the Indian peoples towards their governors, believed that the immense Indian Empire would one day vanish¹ He was not alone in this view Sir John Malcolm, too, felt that in an empire like India they were always in danger.² This school, although it correctly reflected the spirit of the times, was regarded as "pessimist"

2. While Malcolm talked of the permanence of British rule, Lawrence felt that the whole affair was a matter of careful balance and readjustment Elphinstone, learning from Malcolm and Munro, named at least one condition to such permanence He held that the introduction of Indians into a share in their own government was not only inevitable, but a necessary condition of the English dominion He wrote in 1822.

"It may be half a century before we are obliged to do so, but the system of government and of education which we have already established must some time or other work such a change on the people of this country, that it will be impossible to confine them to subordinate employment, and if we have not previously opened vents for their ambition and

✓ ¹ Sir Charles Metcalfe, acting Governor-General, 1835-1836 J W Kaye, *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, London, 1855, p 116 "All India is at all times looking out for our downfall Our ruin, if it be ever commenced, will probably be rapid and sudden"

Pages 162-63 "Our downfall may be short work When it commences it will probably be rapid . The disaffection which would willingly root us out exists abundantly, the concurrence of circumstances sufficient to call it into general action may at any time happen"

✓ ² *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p 196 (This minute was written on May 16, 1835, after Sir Charles Metcalfe had assumed the Governor-Generalship)

ability, we may expect an explosion which will overturn our Government."¹

Henry Lawrence said openly "We cannot expect to hold India for ever" England might retain India only as a 'noble ally enlightened and brought into the scale of nations under our guidance and fostering care.' ² This represents the liberal school

³ There was a third school of pure imperialists Wellesley and Dalhousie accepted the British Empire as more or less in the nature of things. It seemed absurd to them to speculate on England thrust out of India

These schools reflected the spirit of their times and they are by no means dead

The condition of English society in India between the years 1830 and 1838 was such that it was not unnatural for Metcalfe to take the view he did. The relations between the rulers and the ruled were by no means ideal. In high quarters where Governors-General had to deal with equal or "inferior" Indian powers, it was a question of glorious pageants³ and assemblies, presents and counter-presents,⁴

¹ To Sir Thomas Munro October 27 1822 T. H. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone* in two volumes, Murray London, 1884, vol. II, p. 143

² H. M. Lawrence, *Essays Military and Political Written in India*, London, 1859 pp. 59-60

³ Pageants and Durbars are characteristic of Viceregal functions. They existed even before Metcalfe. Note Lady Curzon's description quoted in Lord Ronaldsday's *Curzon*, vol. II p. 93

Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava describes a Rawal Pindi Durbar in *Our Viceregal Life in India*, 1890, vol. I, pp. 92-95 (Friday March 26, 1885), p. 98 (Tuesday March 31 1885)

Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 76 (*Journal*, Agra, January 9 1907), describes the Agra Durbar Balls for the King's birthday balls for the Queen's birthday balls for the Viceroy's birthday—these fill interminably a Viceroy's sojourn in India.

See Dufferin and Ava, op. cit. vol. I, p. 152.

✓ ⁴ Presents and counter presents are another feature of Viceregal life in India. Mary Minto gives several accounts of such customs. The Amir—"the Afghan barbarian"—lavishly distributed presents to Mary Minto and her two daughters. To Mary Minto he sent a charm in the shape of a tiny golden ship on which were a swallow and the words "Goodbye, India." To Eileen he sent a golden book, to Ruby a golden case with good wishes and a ruby

Ibid., pp. 107-8. It is not necessary to mention fruits (ibid. p. 88) and ponies (ibid., p. 135), which also form presents to these Viceroines.

Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 169 (*Journal* November 10, 1907) "Toward

tours and hunts¹ Outsiders mistake these easily for the essential India Apart from a few men like Tod, Malcolm, Munro, and Lawrence, average Englishmen tended to seem aloof and arrogant Heber blamed his countrymen because they made themselves a separate caste, disliking and being disliked by all their neighbours² There was a tendency to make the racial division abrupt both in the army and in the civil occupations such as the judicial service. Little attempt was made to encourage the good work of Indian subordinates Censure was freely showered on those who failed. There was, as there is today, a lack of "moral" sensitiveness in the average official Englishman.³ Taj Mahal and its surrounding buildings were used for quadrille and tiffin parties where guests ate ham and drank champagne⁴ Servants

the end of our visit he [the shy Nizam] began to thaw, and at our farewell luncheon produced a brooch from his pocket, made of a lucky tiger bone, set with diamonds which he shyly slipped into my hand under the tablecloth, begging me to accept it as a souvenir "

¹ For an account of tours and hunts, see Mary Minto, *op cit*, pp 67, 94-96, 173

Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *op cit*, vol 1, pp 214-15, 233, 236, 246-47, 250 One gets a good idea of what these tours mean by reading this Vicerine's *Journal*, *ibid*, chapter v, pp 192 ff

✓ Lord Ronaldshay, *Life of Curzon*, vol 11, pp 244-46

✓ E S Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, London, 1930, p 112

Sleeman remarks that the people of India hardly ever think of hunting and shooting for mere amusement See his *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, V A Smith's edition, vol 1, p 145

✓ ² R Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* (From Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825, etc Madras and the Southern Provinces, 1826, etc), fourth edition, three volumes, London, vol 11, pp 343-44: "Of this foolish, surly national pride, I see but too many instances daily, and I am convinced it does us much harm in this country We shut out the natives from our society and a bullying, insolent manner is continually assumed in speaking to them " (January 13, 1825)

✓ ³ Geoffrey Tyson, *Danger in India*, London, 1932, with an introduction by the Earl of Lytton He speaks of "cruel indifference to people" Page 114 "The indifference displayed by the average Englishman to the culture of the land of his temporary adoption is positively appalling, and were I an Indian it would constitute for me nothing short of a gross insult "

✓ ⁴ Emily Eden, *Up the Country* (letters written to her sister from the Upper Provinces of India), with an introduction and notes by Edward Thompson, 1930, p 362 (Monday, December 1830) "We dined in what once had been a mosque Still I thought it was rather shocking our eating ham and drinking wine in it."

Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 229 (*Journal*, November 24, 1908) "The first

were freely beaten.¹ It was the same world when Lord Elgin wrote in 1857 "I have seldom, from man or woman since I came to the East, heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world."² Little value was put on 'native life.'³ Women who came largely from the middle classes in England contributed most to race prejudice. This arrogance and superiority plus the political, social, economic, and military grievances of the Indians, produced the Mutiny of panic and vengeance.⁴ But this arrogance did not die with the Mutiny. It still exists. It was these conditions of the times that made Metcalfe sound pessimistic notes about the permanence of the Empire in India.

The second school also reflected the spirit of the times. It was a period of reconstruction, a period of soldier-statesmen.

Lord Minto commenced its preservation and restoration and put a stop to the vandalism of tourists who used to chip off pieces of the marble panels to carry away as souvenirs.

¹ E. Eden, *Letters from India*, vol. 1, p. 337. The reason given by Miss Eden for the attachment of their servants to Government House was that "it was one of the few houses in Calcutta where they were not beaten."

✓ Sir Henry Cotton, *Indian and Home Memoirs*, London 1911 p. 65. "I am bound to say that this pernicious practice of striking natives and especially domestic servants prevailed as a common and general habit during the whole of my residence in India."

² *Letters and Journals of James Eighth Earl of Elgin* edited by T. Walrond with a preface by A. P. Stanley. London, 1872 (letter to his wife, August 21 1857 Calcutta), p. 199. "detestation, contempt, ferocity vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object."

³ *Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin*, p. 417. "The other day a station-master somewhere up country kicked a native who was milking a goat belonging to the former." Other instances in which the natives have died from the effect of personal chastisement administered by Europeans have occurred since I have been here." How true it is even in our day!

⁴ See Tyson, op. cit., pp. 112-13. (For expression of bad manners and vulgarity on the part of Englishmen towards Indians.) The incidents that Tyson describes are recent.

W. S. Blunt, *India Under Ripon*, 1909 (a private diary), chapter xiii, "Race Hatred" p. 263. In this present year of grace 1884 (after the Mutiny) no hotel keeper in India dares receive a native guest into his house, not on account of any ill-will of his own, but through fear of losing his custom." See pp. 263-68 for insult and rough treatment of Indians.

✓ Page 261. "I shall no doubt incur anger by saying it, but it is a fact that the English woman in India during the last thirty years has been the cause of half the bitter feelings there between race and race."

✓ Tyson, op. cit., p. 116. "We will govern you, we will tax you. We will trade with you, but we will not eat with you. That is the sum total of this arrogant postulation."

It was carried on by Malcolm in Central India, Elphinstone in Deccan, Munro in Madras, and Metcalfe, Tod, and Ochterlony in Rajputana. This school has its ancestry as far back as Warren Hastings. It was Warren Hastings who first realized that if British power in India was to be lasting, it must become an Indian power. An exception to this school is to be noted in Lord Cornwallis, a portly country squire, "an excellent specimen of the class of English landed magnates," who had an extraordinary distrust of all "native" officials.¹ He insisted that all judicial proceedings should be at least supervised by Europeans. His plan for paying liberal salaries applied only to the European service. Such entire exclusion of all indigenous agency from any responsible position was, as Marshman justly observed, the great and radical error of Lord Cornwallis.² This by no means represents the best policy of the British towards Indians at that time.

Lord Metcalfe wrote on September 7, 1820; "I confess that I distrust native agency. There is no such being, I feel perfectly sure, as an honest native agent, from Cape Comorin to Cashmere, and they who confide in them are sure to be deceived. But we must make use of them, for we can seldom do without them, and they have a right to kind, respectful, and gentleman-like treatment."³ What a contradictory statement!

Elphinstone wrote to Henry Ellis in 1826. "The period when they may be admitted into council as you propose seems to be distant, but they might very safely be consulted on all topics not political, and where there were no secrets to keep and no places to dispose of."⁴ The note is unvaried, distrust of the Indian on one hand and the need for the employment of him to high positions on the other.

The noble Lord, eighth Earl of Elgin, wrote. "It is a terrible business this living among inferior races."⁵ In July 16, 1862,

¹ "I conceive," he wrote, "that all regulations for the reform of that (criminal) department would be useless and nugatory, whilst the execution of them depends upon any native whatever." Quoted in V. A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, second edition, p. 571.

² Quoted in Smith, *op cit*, p. 571.

³ *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, *op cit*, p. 152.

⁴ Cotton, *Elphinstone*, p. 188.

⁵ *Letters and Journals, Eighth Earl of Elgin*, p. 199.

he wrote to Sir Charles Wood 'Situated as we are in this country a small minority ruling a vast population that differs from us in blood, civilization, colour, and religion, monopolizing in our own territories all positions of high dignity and emolument, and exercising even over states ostensibly independent a paramount authority it is manifest that the question of how we ought to treat that class of natives who consider that they have a natural right to be leaders of men and to occupy the first places in India, must always be one of special difficulty. If you attempt to crush all superiorities you unite the native populations in a homogeneous mass against you. If you foster pride of rank and position, you encourage pretensions which you cannot gratify, partly because you dare not abdicate your own functions as a paramount power, and partly because you cannot control the arrogance of your subjects of the dominant race.'¹ This dual and contradictory policy is characteristic of British rule in India. It is emphasized over and over again in the official despatches.

Lytton² renewed the idea of Warren Hastings. In his despatch of May 2, 1878, he recommended the admission of Indians to high posts, on several grounds. The employment of 'native' agency more largely in the civil administration was an overpowering necessity. It would be fulfilling the pledges given by the British to the Indians. It would have political advantage in associating the 'subject races' with the government of the country. Above all, from a financial point of view it would be profitable to employ the cheapest native agency available.³

He again wrote in 1878 'The Viceroy explained the position in which his Government was placed between the pressure of two antagonistic responsibilities. On the one hand, the pledges implied in the action of Parliament, and the hopes and expectations which have grown out of them in the native mind on the other hand, the imperial necessity of maintaining the safety and welfare of the Empire by restricting the most important

¹ *Letters and Journals Eighth Earl of Elgin*, p. 421

² For a short history of the Indian Civil Service up to the time of Lytton, see Lady Betty Balfour *op cit.*, pp. 524-27

³ Lady Betty Balfour *op cit.*, pp. 528-30

executive posts to Europeans, and the undoubted claims of the existing covenanted service to a maintenance of the reasonable expectations and prospects under which they were induced to compete for entry into that service"¹

He further wrote in 1879: "Under the present system we are practically bound by law and custom to appoint Europeans to all higher posts. To appoint a native to any such post is an altogether exceptional act for which we are obliged to show very special reasons or obtain special authority. What I say is—shift this condition, at least in regard to a certain number of high appointments. . . . In regard to these particular appointments, let the general rule be laid down that *prima facie* natives only are to hold them. . . . Define more clearly the promises which have been given so vaguely—indeed so rashly. Cautiously circumscribe them, but then make them realities within their necessary limits."²

We find the same attitude in this century. Minto wrote to Morley on July 5, 1906. "As to a native member of council, there is a great deal to be said for it. To me such a possibility appeals very strongly, but I cannot disguise from myself the doubts which naturally arise as to committing State secrets to a native colleague." This was spiced with a liberal admission: "At the same time I do not feel sure that we are not exaggerating the risk; that our suspicions are not largely due to our own inherent prejudice against another race, and that the time may not have come when we can afford to take a broader view of things and offer to recognized ability a more direct share in the government of India"³ The words "distrust of the native" were later replaced by a polite libelling word "inefficiency" "The cult of efficiency has been the stumbling-block in the way of the increased employment of Indians under Government" An Indian is not to be trusted. He is not efficient This attitude naturally "fostered discontent among those who have watched post after post created and filled by Englishmen"⁴

¹ Lady Betty Balfour, *op cit*, p 528

² *Ibid*, pp 532-33 (Letter to Lord Cranbrook in July 1879)

³ Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 98

⁴ H. Dodwell, *A Sketch of the History of India from 1858 to 1918*, London, 1925, pp 16, 214

But there are exceptions to this liberal and circumscribed school. Munro, Elphinstone, and Malcolm were the exceptions. Munro lived his life with the Indians. His letters show him, living with them at Salem, in South Canara in the ceded districts. He spent his life among the villagers instead of sitting in his "cutchery," like the Bengal civilians. He thus learned how to understand the Indian people. He was never petty. He wrote in 1822 "The best way for a collector to instruct the natives is to set them an example in his own conduct."¹ He strongly pointed out the impolicy of excluding the natives of India from all situations of trust. He asked "With what grace can we talk of paternal government if we exclude the natives from every important office, and say, as we did till very lately, that in a country (Madras) containing 15 millions of inhabitants no man but a European shall be entrusted with as much authority as to order the punishment of a single stroke of a rattan?"² He instituted something like a native board of revenue at Madras. He opened the door to the employment of natives in high and important situations.³

Elphinstone received his ideas from Munro and Malcolm,⁴ as they corresponded with one another a great deal. He always wrote in admiration of Malcolm's sympathetic treatment of the natives. He was ever ready to learn from Munro. He wrote

¹ J. Bradshaw *Life of Sir Thomas Munro* (Rulers of India Series), Oxford 1894, p. 185.

Bradshaw op. cit. p. 191. The full minute on the employment of natives is in A. J. Arbuthnot, *Sir Thomas Munro*, London, 1889, pp. 149-51 or in his larger work, two volumes, London, 1881, vol. II, pp. 319-27, p. 319. All offices that can be held by natives without danger to our power might without advantage be left to them. We are arrogant enough to suppose that we can with our limited numbers do the work of a nation."

G. R. Gleig, *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, 1830, London, three volumes, vol. II, pp. 422 ff. (minute on the promotion of natives, April 27 1827), vol. III (minute on the state of the country and the condition of the people) (December 31 1824), pp. 319 ff. He did not share Elgin's view. Unless we suppose that they are inferior to us in natural talent, which there is no reason to believe, it is much more likely that they will be duly qualified for their employments than Europeans for theirs. "Ibid., p. 358.

³ M. S. Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay wrote to Munro, October 27 1822, Poona.

T. H. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mount Stuart Elphinstone* two volumes, London, 1884, vol. II, pp. 142-43.

⁴ See Gleig, op. cit., vol. III, for personal correspondence.

in 1822: "It is necessary that we should pave the way for introduction of the natives to some share in the government of their country."¹ In 1826 in a letter to Henry Ellis, he suggested the admission of natives to all but military posts.² He reiterated these ideas in his minute on education.³ In 1850 he expressed identically the same opinions in a letter to Charles Hay Cameron. In 1854 he wrote to Colebrook discussing similar ideas. In 1858, before his death, he remarked that a time must come when natives will have to be introduced into the new council of the Secretary of State.⁴

Malcolm was another who shared the views of Munro, Elphinstone, and Colebrook.⁵ Malcolm wrote to Maloney: "Were I to remain in India, I do not think that there is a human being whom I should dread half as much as an able Calcutta civilian whose travels are limited to two or three hundred miles, with a hookah in his mouth, some good but abstract maxims in his head, the Regulations in his right hand, the Company's charter in his left, and a quire of wirewoven foolscap before him." He understood the Indian character. He sympathized with Indian feelings.⁶ He always wanted to take

¹ Colebrooke, *Life of Elphinstone*, op cit, vol II, p 143.

² J S Cotton, *Mount Stuart Elphinstone*, Oxford, 1892, pp 187-88

³ In 1824 Cotton, op cit, pp 188-89 *Selections from the Minutes and Other Official Writings of M Elphinstone* Edited by G W Forrest, London, 1884, p 96 "The natives are shut from all higher employments in their own country"

⁴ Cotton, op cit, pp 189-90 But Elphinstone, unlike Munro, was contradictory in his judgment of the Indians like Metcalfe, Elgin and Minto. Cotton, op cit, p 134 "There are among them (Brahmins) many instances of decent and respectable lives, and although they are generally subtle and insincere, I have met with some on whom I could depend for sound and candid opinions"

⁵ Metcalfe wrote "Is it true that such a host of fine fellows as Sir John Malcolm, Mr Elphinstone, Sir Thomas Munro and Sir Edward Colebrook are united in the same opinions? If they were, it would be almost treason to dispute them" *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p 152

⁶ J W Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Sir John Malcolm* (from unpublished letters and journals), two volumes, London, vol II, pp 335-36 The comparison between Metcalfe and Malcolm is interesting

Ibid, p 345 Malcolm was always accessible to men of all classes and all characters. He worked with the door of his tent open to every point of compass. His eyes, his ears and his understanding were ever open as his doors. Metcalfe was a man of reserved nature. He could not, like Malcolm,

the Indian people into his confidence.¹ He insisted upon conduct and not on words in the relations between officials and Indians.² He regretted deeply that there was no opening for natives. He wrote "We must, or we cannot last, contrive to associate the natives with us in the task of rule, and in the benefits and gratifications which accrue from it."³

We now see that this idea of associating the Indians with the administration and government⁴ of the country has a long history which dates from Warren Hastings. Minto just seized this idea and pressed it on Morley for recognition with such intensity that it was easily mistaken for his own.

The third school also reflected the spirit of the times. Wellesley was a thorough-going imperialist. He believed in the superiority of British over Indian government. This con-

sist down on the grass to converse freely with a knot of poor villagers, or pass off his plesantries on a wild jungle-bred robber

Ibid., p. 384 (Advice to a Young Political Captain S——) "You should begin by making yourself master of the geography of the country and of the history character and habits of its inhabitants."

Tyson, op cit., p. 115 "What I do find extraordinary in our mentality is that ninety nine non-official Englishmen out of a hundred who spend a working life in India apparently do not think it worth their while to learn anything of the history of the country or the languages spoken by the peoples."

W. S. Blunt, op cit. p. 268 "How can we sit gossiping with the natives, say these (officials) "Yet it was exactly by gossip that Lawrence and Nicholson and Meadows Taylor gained their influence in former days."

¹ Letter to Colonel Smith (Exclusion of Intermediate Agents) "The principle upon which I proceed has not its origin in a distrust of those near me, but in a desire to give confidence to the inhabitants of the country" Kaye, op cit., vol. II p. 355

² Kaye, op cit. vol. II, p. 367 (Letter to Mount Stuart Elphinstone Management of the Natives of India) "The natives of India must be spoken to by actions, not words"

³ Kaye, op cit., vol. II, p. 392 (Employment of Natives of India in the Public Service—to Mr. J. Young) (These extracts are from his correspondence during the years 1821-1828)

⁴ Sometimes a distinction is made between administration and government. I think it is a mere quibble so far as India is concerned, as at present or previously constituted. The earlier agitation on the part of the Indians was for their association with the administration. The later agitation was for association with the government of the country

Cf. E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* p. 70 "They cannot and will not understand that civil servants in this country are, and must be more and more, politicians." Note the implied connection between civil servants and politicians

viction enabled him to make annexations right and left without any qualms of conscience. Every annexation appeared to him to be an undoubted and unqualified public benefit.¹ His policy of subsidiary alliances and annexations directed to the immediate purpose of making Britain the supreme power in India was largely determined by his resolve to exclude for ever all possibility of French competition. Great Britain was then engaged in the Napoleonic wars. Hastings, like Wellesley, made vast additions to the Empire and consolidated its greatness, but it was Dalhousie who completed the structure of British rule in India.² His motives were dictated by broad imperial policy. He was profoundly convinced that it was for the good of the peoples of India that they should pass from Oriental administration to the protection of British Raj. The work begun by Clive was completed by him.

Of these three views, Minto deftly utilized the views both of the imperialists and of the progressives. He garnered the fruits of the ideas left by his predecessors. One such idea is the idea of "counterpoise" which is an integral part of British policy. The first recorded instance of the British policy of counterpoise in India is seen in the affair of Riza Khan and Nundacomar. They were the two most prominent and wealthy noblemen of Bengal of their day, one a Brahmin, the other a Moslem. They were bitter enemies and rivals. It was Nundacomar's dearest ambition to ruin the Moslem and supplant him as Diwan. When the Moslem was deposed and held for trial he thought his chance had come. *The directors of the East India Company had privately suggested to Hastings that the Brahmin's abilities and disposition might be put to good use by employing him in the investigation of his rival's conduct, and that if his services proved useful he might be rewarded in such manner as Hastings saw fit; always providing that he was not*

¹ Smith, *Oxford History of India*, pp. 580 ff. Lord Curzon spoke of his passion for aggrandisement in his *British Government in India*, vol. II, p. 176.

² Lord Curzon, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 250, *ibid.*, 221. "Quite apart from his conquests and acquisitions which placed Dalhousie in the direct line of lineal descent from Wellesley and Lord Hastings and which rounded off the British dominions in India to the approximate shape which they have since borne."

given any place of trust or authority. Accordingly, Hastings did what he was told to do. He employed Nundacomar in the unpleasant task of uncovering incriminating evidence against Mohamed Riza Khan. The Brahmin's reward was the appointment of his son as the Begum's Diwan, which served the additional purpose of furthering Hastings's plans to uproot the late minister's influence.¹ The subsequent policy of counterpoise is not so crude as this, but in line with the refinements of the age. The essence of this policy is, it satisfies the interests of both the ruling class and those of the self-seeking ambitious classes of the ruled. This policy is further seen in its application to the various new classes that have come into existence. What are they? How did the Government apply this policy to them?

¹ A. Merwyn Davies, *Strange Destiny*, p. 77 ✓

Organization of British Policy: The Emergence of the Professional Classes

WHAT was lacking during the early part of the nineteenth century, the years of Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone, was present in the early part of the twentieth century, the years of Minto and Morley.¹ This was the organization of the rising middle classes. A history of these organizations from 1851 to 1885 gives us an idea of the rising educated intelligentsia and their political demands. The voices of the Madras Native Association, the Bombay Association, and the British Indian Association could faintly be heard. Prior to 1851 the need of associating the Indians with the administration was felt by several Englishmen like Malcolm, Munro, and Elphinstone. After 1851 up to 1884, the few Indian associations and liberal Englishmen like Lytton and Ripon supported this movement of Indianization. After 1885, the Indian National Congress, by far the strongest and the latest of these organizations, began to storm heaven for "political" jobs. In 1906 came new elements into the Congress. It was at this stage that Minto came to India.

These organizations are directly the creations of British rule in India.² Britain from the very beginning emphasized the importance of educating the upper classes.³ In these conditions

¹ Munro was Governor of Madras from 1820 to 1827. Elphinstone was Governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827, and Sir John Malcolm from 1827 to 1830. Minto was Governor-General of India from 1905 to 1909. Morley was Secretary of State for India at this time.

² Lady Betty Balfour, op cit, p. 109. Lytton wrote to Lord Salisbury, May 11, 1887: "The only political representatives of native opinion are the Baboos, whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native press." Lord Salisbury spoke of them as "the more artificial and weakly elements, which we ourselves have made and have brought into existence." Quoted in *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, p. 545.

³ Injunction of the Court on the Expediency of Educating the Upper Classes. Paragraph 8, "The improvements in education, however, which

there sprang up in India the "educated class." It includes lawyers, doctors, journalists, students, and Government servants. In 1858 they were few in number. With the establishment of universities, the number grew with great and increasing rapidity. The Government set to work to develop education, but neglected to encourage an expansion of employment corresponding to the growth of the professional or educated class. Since there were no outlets for their ambitions and abilities, the explosion that Elphinstone spoke of occurred. The Indian National Congress was organized. It shot its first political bolt—a demand for jobs. By the time that Minto came to power the Congress acquired new elements—the trading merchant industrialist class. It shot another political bolt—protection. This class was the product of the industrial revolution. The earlier classes were the product of the British system of education.

most effectively contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people are those which concern the education of the higher classes—of the persons possessing leisure and natural influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction amongst these classes you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class." These are the injunctions of the honourable court to Madras in 1830.

Paragraph 15 "It is our anxious desire to afford to the higher classes of the natives of India the means of instruction in European sciences and of access to the literature of civilized Europe. The character which may be given to the classes possessed of leisure and natural influence ultimately determines that of the whole people."

Paragraph 17 "The classes who may be deemed to be influential and in so far the upper classes in India may be ranked as follows: (1) The landowners, Jagirdars, representatives of the former feudatories and persons in authorities under native powers, and who may be termed the soldier class. (2) Those who have acquired wealth in trade or commerce or the commercial class. (3) The higher employees of government. (4) Brahmins, etc."

Paragraph 19 (Of these four classes) the most influential class whom the Government are able to avail themselves of in diffusing the seeds of education are the Brahmins. But the report of the Board of Education of the Bombay Presidency for the year 1850-1851 says that it is hopeless to enforce the strict limitation of superior education to the upper classes.

Quoted by B. R. Ambedkar Report Appendix D Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iii, pp 106-10. Up to 1884 the Government of India confined the education to the upper classes.

The Classes of Princes, Rajahs, and Maharajas

THE earliest class that came into conflict and contact with the British was the class of princes, rajahs, and maharajas. The policy pursued by Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Dalhousie was reversed. The Mutiny opened a new perspective.¹ The British realized that their victory rested on the loyalty of the Indian States.² The policy of annexation was abandoned. From the beginning the British were disposed to support the princes. Sir Henry Lawrence was the leader of a school which demanded a fair recognition of the claims of the Indian States, and urged the need for wise and generous treatment of the natural leaders of the people and the influential classes, fallen into an unsatisfactory state after ages of war and turmoil. They also advocated the policy of continuing in a large measure the independence, under British protection, of Indian States and dynasties, and of educating their rulers for their positions and guiding them in the discharge of their functions.³ To Lytton the Indian peasantry was an inert mass; the professional classes represented nothing but the social anomaly of their own position.

¹ The clemency of Canning was proverbial. Lord Elgin wrote to Sir Charles Wood, September 9, 1862, Calcutta: "No doubt Canning earned a substantial claim to the gratitude of native chiefs by adopting a more liberal and considerate policy towards them than that pursued by his predecessor." *Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin*, p. 421.

Morley wrote to Minto, August 26, 1908: "Clemency Canning was a great man after all." Mary Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

² Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 721: "The rulers of all the larger native or protected States remained faithful even when their troops showed signs of disaffection or revolted."

Sir John Strachey, *India*, 1903, p. 462: Lord Canning after the Mutiny said: "These patches of native government served as a breakwater to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave."

³ J. J. M. Innes, *Sir Henry Lawrence*, Oxford, 1898, pp. 8-9. For a history of this idea see G. N. Singh, *Indian States and British India*, pp. 56-60, *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, pp. 508-9.

The only class he wanted to favour was the Indian aristocracy. He suggested an Indian Privy Council with a view to absorb the great Indian chiefs. Temple was another who advocated a similar idea.¹ We already noted that Lord Curzon examined this idea only to discard it. We also noted that Minto and Morley discussed this idea as a suitable one to counter the ideas of the Congress.² Policy fluctuated with circumstances. Just as the Mutiny changed the policy of the British towards the States, so the strength and growth of the Indian National Congress,³ and the advent of the proletariat changed their policy again.

The imperialist World War encouraged this change of policy. The British needed reactionary allies. They sought them in the princes. They used their money, munitions, and men for war. By initiating conferences with the ruling princes they flattered their vanities.⁴ They propounded a new theory that

¹ Temple, *The Story of My Life*, vol. ii, p. 78. "Towards the end of my time (1848-1880) I thought that a native aristocracy based on antiquity and on the traditions of indigenous rule might be consolidated and developed under British rule."

² *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, p. 508. "Political unrest reached the point at which it could not be mistaken. Minto consulted the leading States confirming the spread of anarchist conspiracies. His reform proposals included the revival of something like Lytton's earlier scheme. But again the project fell through."

Minto wrote to Morley August 12, 1908. "A Council of Chiefs small in number to begin with, to deal with questions affecting Native States and their relations with British India, for the express purpose of recognizing the loyalty of ruling chiefs and collating their interest in imperial affairs." Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 214.

In July 1906, in the House of Commons, Lord Morley said "I sometimes think that we make a mistake in not attaching the weight we ought to to these powerful princes as standing powers in India. It is a question whether we do not persist in holding these powerful men too lightly." Quoted in S. M. Mitra, *Anglo-Indian Studies* 1913 p. 33.

³ The Directorate of the Chamber's special organization. "The British Crown and the Indian States" (an outline sketch drawn up on behalf of the standing committee of the Chamber of Princes), 1929. London, p. 94. "The growth of the Nationalist movement in British India caused him alarm and he saw in the princes a strong bulwark against subversive movements" ("him" and "he" refer to Minto).

⁴ Lord Hardinge, "initiated Conferences with the ruling princes on matters of imperial interest and on matters affecting the States as a whole." Butler Committee Report, p. 20. This is the official language the rulers use in public documents. But in private letters they openly express that they desire a council of chiefs to counter the aims of the Congress.

the relations of the Indian States are direct with the Crown, and not with the Government of India¹ They created a Chamber of Princes at last in 1921 The old school of Lawrence triumphed Curzon's policy received a setback The Indian States have come to stay, and they are largely the creation of British rule² They therefore, with few exceptions, "are the most servile tools of English despotism, . . . the strongholds of the present abominable English system, and the greatest obstacles to Indian progress"³

¹ "The theory of direct relationship with the Crown has been gradually evolved by the princes and the British since the pronouncement of August 20, 1917" G N Singh, *Indian States*, p 87

A B Keith, *The Constitution, Administration and the Laws of the Empire*, p 250 He states the view of the direct relations

Sir Leslie Scott, "Joint Opinion" Report, p 60

Butler Committee Report, p 23, para 38, also p 31, para 58

² Cf L F R Williams, *The Cultural Significance of Indian States*, p 7
 "For our own purposes we kept in existence as independent entities small states which would, but for our insistence, have become baronies incorporated with greater neighbours In many instances we created princes out of feudal lordlings In some cases we reduced princes to the position of landed proprietors, and even after this process was nominally completed we continued for thirty years to absorb state territory until at long last we produced the proportions which today exist between British India and Indian India"

³ Karl Marx, *Letters on India* (the Native States), 1937, p 52

The Class of Landed Magnates

THE next class—the baronial houses of Bihar, the great Taluqdars of Oudh,¹ and the titled landed aristocracy of Bengal and of the permanently settled tracts of Madras—is partly also the creation of British rule.² “Englishmen,” once said Thomas Munro, “are as great fanatics in politics as Moslems in religion,” particularly in class-politics.³ Lord Cornwallis, himself a landed magnate, reproduced in entirely alien surroundings something as nearly approaching to the English land-owning aristocracy as could be achieved.⁴ Lord Metcalfe was the one who championed the rights of village Zamindars.⁵ He was opposed to the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. He wrote “We not only relinquished the right of the Government to any further revenue from land, which was undoubtedly a great sacrifice, but what was much worse, we destroyed all the

For an account of the Taluqdars of Oudh and the Zamindars of Agra, see Indian Statutory Commission, vol. I p. 34.

N N Ghose, *Kristo Das Pal—A Study* Calcutta, 1887 p. 117 “The Zamindars, with whom the Permanent Settlement was made, were an aristocracy manufactured by Lord Cornwallis. They were entirely the creatures of the state.”

² J. Mill, *The History of British India*, fourth edition by H. H. Wilson, London, vol. v p. 492. But the legislators were English aristocrats and aristocratical prejudices prevailed.” See footnote by Wilson voicing disapproval.

Mill, op. cit. p. 482 Ramsay Muir *The Making of British India* “The larger Zamindars were very strongly opposed to the Permanent Settlement.” Their failure to pay and consequent sales of their estates paved the way for their destruction and the creation of a new class of proprietors.

“The destruction of the proprietary classes was a permanent bequest (of the Permanent Settlement) to posterity.” But this was only temporary. See F. D. Ascoli *Early Revenue History of Bengal* Oxford, 1917 pp. 74, 81.

⁵ *Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, pp. 36–41. Page 41 “Then instead of disaffected and disaffected landlords, truly complaining that we have injured them by diminishing their consequence and their profits, we may expect to have landholders bound to us by the strongest ties of self interest and acknowledging, from irresistible conviction, the incomparable benefits of our rule.”

existing property in land, by creating a class of proprietors to whom we recklessly made over the property of others"¹ He did not think that Lord Cornwallis was the "great creator of private property in land in India." He thought that Cornwallis was the creator of private property in the State revenues, the great destroyer of private property in land in India, destroying hundreds or thousands of proprietors for every one that he gratuitously created²

The Ryotwari system of Munro was no better than the Zamindar system. Marx wrote in 1853 "The Zamindaree and the Ryotwar system were both of them agrarian revolutions effected by British Ukases, and opposed to each other the one aristocratic, the other democratic the one a caricature of English landlordism, the other of French peasant-proprietorship, but pernicious, both combining the most contradictory character—both made not for the people who cultivate the soil, nor for the holder who owns it, but for the Government that taxes it"³

The Ryotwari districts have long ago lost what slight resemblance to that system they ever possessed Between the cultivating peasant and the State there has grown up a whole hierarchy of intermediaries, moneylenders, and merchants, rich farmers and landlords⁴ While destroying the old Indian feudal landed system, expropriating the old landlords, the

¹ Metcalfe Papers, p 254

² Metcalfe Papers, p 254 Of course, Metcalfe was thinking of the older Zamindars.

³ K Marx, *New York Tribune*, August 5, 1853 Quoted in Ralph Fox, *Colonial Policy of British Imperialism*, New York, 1933, p 18

Sir Erskine Perry, "Punjab Tenancy Act" quoted in Edwardes and Merivale (*Lawrence*), vol 11, pp 178-79 "It must be borne in mind that two different schools of theorists on land tenures in India have always existed amongst our English officials—the one in favour of a landed aristocracy, the other in support of peasant proprietorship, and, accordingly, as supporters of either theory filled the highest places in government, the views of one or the other party prevailed, and all the powers of the government were put in force to give effect to them Under the influence of the first theory, the perpetual settlement was made in Bengal (which, according to Neibhur, was the most wholesale confiscation of property in and known to history); and recently the Talookdars in Oudh were constituted the absolute lords of the soil Under the influence of the second theory, the cultivators in Bengal were made hereditary proprietors"

⁴ Fox, op cit, p 19

English created a new class of landlords and parasitic capitalist farmers

Sir Henry Lawrence desired for the Trans-Sutlej States of Punjab a class of natural and influential leaders of the people. He desired to create and foster a similar aristocracy from among the chiefs and influential men in the several Trans-Sutlej districts.¹ He attached a great importance to the question of Jagirdars. He was a staunch supporter of the principle of light assessments and of material improvements.² He would have the borders of the Punjab, he wrote to Lord Hardinge, lined by a cordon of Jagirdars to meet and manage the hillmen.³ He was aware of the corruption of these classes. Yet he insisted upon maintaining their proprietary rights.⁴

Lord Dalhousie was opposed to this idea. Like a good Whig, Canning was aghast to find great landlords wholly without influence or functions of any kind. He began the experiment of entrusting the landlords in various provinces—Talukdars, Zamindars, and Jagirdars—with magisterial functions.⁵

One of the causes of the Mutiny was the treatment of the Talukdars and the resumption of their lands which had been held revenue-free for centuries.⁶ Another was the practice of

¹ Innes, *Sir Henry Lawrence*, pp. 118-19. H. B. Edwardes and H. Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, two volumes, London, 1872, vol. II, p. 289. Sir Henry Lawrence showed the Talookdars all the attention and consideration in his power."

² Innes, op. cit. p. 141.

³ Innes, op. cit., p. 142.

⁴ Innes, op. cit. pp. 141-42.

⁵ In an official minute of 1861 he wrote: "It often afterwards occurred to me as a fact of almost portentous significance that from the borders of Oudh back to Calcutta I might travel for a whole day through many an estate of princely extent yielding a vast income and immense influence to its owner but that no one of these owners could exercise the legal authority of a parish constable." Quoted in Dodwell, *A Sketch of the History of India*, pp. 225-26.

⁶ Syed A. Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, Benares, 1873, pp. 26-30. G. F. I. Graham, *The Life and Work of S. A. Khan*, pp. 45-48.

Captain Wilson, *Memorandum of Various Features Connected with Sir Henry Lawrence's Administration of Oudh*, quoted in Edwardes and Merivale, op. cit., vol. II, p. 313. "On his arrival he found grievous discontent among several classes of the population of Oudh, viz. the nobility of Lucknow and the members and retainers of the royal family, the official classes, the old soldiery and the entire country population, noble and peasant alike."

Edwardes and Merivale, op. cit. vol. II, p. 310. "The Talookdars have

sale in satisfaction of debt which led to further impoverishment and discontent of the landlords¹ Just as the Mutiny changed the British policy towards the Indian States, it also changed the policy towards these landed magnates² The growth of the Nationalist movement also contributed to this change in later years.

These landed classes organized themselves into the British Indian Association, established in 1851.³ It is the oldest and the wealthiest political association in Bengal⁴ These classes

been hardly dealt with They have lost half their villages Some Talookdars have lost all "

Cambridge History of India, vol vi, p 205 " it was due not to annexation, but to the harshness with which the Talukdars were treated " The Talukdars themselves were "usurping" ("usurping aristocracy," Edwardes and Merivale, op cit, vol ii, p 289) In turn they were usurped by the British Controversy has raged even to these days whether they ought to be ranked as usurping revenue collectors or a noble relic of feudal institutions Probably they were both See for an account from the point of view of a landlord-magnate, Maharaja Bahadur of Burdwan, *The Indian Horizon*, London, 1932, pp 33-36

¹ Report of the Indian Taxation Inquiry Committee, vol 1, p 45 "There was widespread default in payment and since the law enforced the sale of the estates directly the Zamindars fell into arrears, large numbers of estates were put up for sale "

² R H Craddock in Enclosure XXIV, Cd 4436, 1908, p 2 "A common criticism of the Government of India's scheme (of 1908) that appears in the public press, and is also stated in the papers which accompany this note, is that the government, who have by a long course of legislation endeavoured to check the arbitrary exercise of power by the landlords great and small, of the country, is now seeking to invest these same classes with an importance and an authority of which their own legislation has pronounced them to be unworthy "

³ Indian Statutory Commission, vol 1, p 64 "The Zamindars of Agra have gained cohesion by their membership of the British Indian Association and have magnificent headquarters in the Kaiserbagh at Lucknow " They have their association also with headquarters at Allahabad

Cambridge History of India, vol vi, p 538 "At Calcutta there already existed a British India Association chiefly supported by the landed proprietors to look after their interests "

S N Banerje, *A Nation in the Making*, 1925, p 40 "There was the British Indian Association under the guidance of Kristo Das Pal But it was essentially and by its creed an association of land-holders "

For a short account of the British Indian Association, see J Routledge, *English Rule and Native Opinion in India*, London, 1878, pp 219-22 In the beginning the British Indian Association went hand-in-hand with the Indian Association See Banerje, *A Nation in the Making*, pp 101-2 But later it withdrew its support for the Congress

N N Ghose, *Kristo Das Pal*, p 14

⁴ Ghose, op cit, p 108

are today a recruiting ground for political representation to viceregal councils and assemblies, in which community of interests causes them to support uniformly the measures proposed by the Government. In the year 1883 K. D. Pal was unanimously elected by the British Indian Association for the seat in the viceregal council, placed at its disposal by Lord Ripon.¹ Lord Curzon indicated this body as a suitable constituency for representation of landed interests.² When Montagu came to India, the Maharaja of Burdwan,³ a great landed magnate, headed the British Indian Association, to place its suggestions before him.

¹ Ghose, *op cit.*, p 15

² *Cambridge History of India*, vol vi p 545

³ E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* London, 1930, pp 79-80 "The British Indian Association (is) more or less a conservative body headed by the Maharaja of Burdwan, the best type of conservative Indian. He has a fierce love of the British connection—not a passive acquiescence, but a firm belief in it. He it was that was called a pot bellied Swashbuckler' by Keir Hardie, and retaliated with the far better abuse of calling Keir Hardie a white surdar coolie. He is a large and very rich Zamindar and wishes to be made an independent chief. He has great courage."

The Class of Privileged Tenants

THIS policy of creating a landed aristocracy created in its turn the problem of tenants. The tenants were rack-rented, impoverished, and oppressed¹ The newly-created landlords increased rents which fell heavily on the tenants. The growth of landlordism became rapid² The Government of India felt compelled to pass a series of measures such as the Bengal Tenancy Acts of 1859 and 1885³

A similar solicitude was also shown towards the illiterate cultivating classes, in the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. The result was the creation of a special privileged class of tenants.⁴ By this policy the Government wants to show that it is above classes, and that it plays a mediatorial part. In reality,

¹ Resolutions by the Governor-General of India in Council No 1, January 16, 1902, in *Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government*, published by order of the Governor-General of India in Council, p 7.

² Central Provinces Report in *Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government*, p 98

³ Resolution of the Governor-General of India in Council, op cit, p 8

Ralph Fox, op cit, p 27 "In Bengal the yoke of landlordism (the Zamindars) with its pyramid of sub-landlords had become almost unbearable, and during the mutiny of 1857 the Bengal peasants came out openly not only against the British but against the Zamindars and their agents. The British were quick to draw the lessons and in 1859 the Bengal Tenancy Act was passed guaranteeing occupancy rights to all tenants who had held their lands for 12 years and forbidding the raising of rents otherwise than by a decision of the courts" The Act was never effective. See Captain Trotter, *India Under Victoria*, vol 11, p 31

⁴ Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee Report 1924-25, vol 1, p 48 "The regulations of 1799 and 1812 placed the tenant practically at the mercy of the landlord His property was rendered liable to distraint and his person to imprisonment if he failed to pay his rent, however extortionate it might be It was only in 1859 that a law was enacted restricting the landlord's powers of enhancement in certain cases Later, under the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which has served as a basis for tenancy legislation throughout India, certain privileged classes of tenants were created"

R Fox, op cit, p 27 The aim was to develop a capitalist peasantry in Bengal A class of capitalist peasants was created They ceased to be cultivators and became primarily a moneylender and landlord (class)

its object is, as one authority asserts, to offset one class against another¹ There is also another reason. This policy towards the tenants in opposition to the landed interests² is itself determined by the need to safeguard British interests. The British, unlike the Indian, have mastered the lessons of the Mutiny. They saw the need to pacify the grievances of the tenants who took part in the uprising. They found in them a fulcrum from which to overturn an inconvenient landlordism. They thought they could prove that they have a desire to do equal justice between the two classes. There were the revenue interests to consider. Above all, there must be a certain modicum of existence guaranteed to the tenants, otherwise they cannot be exploited. It was considerations of this kind that led the British to show some concern for the tenants. But in general the policy is to favour the landed interests.³ Now and then a solicitude is shown for the tenants by a pretended pseudo-objective policy of mediation.⁴ But the truth is, the large landlords, many of

¹ Routledge *English Rule and Native Opinion in India*, pp. 22 f. "Then the point of the rights of the tenants as a set-off to that of the landowners was raised and was made a prominent factor in the dispute by men who never will raise the same question at home."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 232-33. the plea of care for the tenants is used merely to show the landlords that there is behind the general question one other fulcrum from which to overturn an inconvenient settlement."

³ The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 was opposed by the Maharaja of Durbhanga who headed the deputation from the landholders of Behar. See for a summary and the Viceroy's (Dufferin) reply Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, *Speeches delivered in India 1884-8 1890*, pp. 37 ff.

The Punjab Land Alienation Act was opposed by Sir Harnam Singh. "Curzon refused to be moved by the lamentations of those who represented the interests of the capitalist class." Ronaldshay *Curzon*, vol. II pp. 292-93.

⁴ Dufferin, *Speeches*, p. 38. The Viceroy admitted this (*Speech*, March 10, 1885) "I must remind you that there are several members of my Council who maintained that so far from the present legislation having erred against the Zamindars, it still fails, on the contrary to give adequate protection to the Raiyats."

Dufferin, *Speeches*, p. 40. I believe with Mr Reynolds that it is a translation and reproduction in the language of the day of the spirit and essence of Lord Cornwallis' Settlement that it is in harmony with his intentions that it carries out his ideas that it is calculated to ensure the results he aimed at; and that it is conceived in the same beneficent and generous spirit which actuated the original framers of the Regulations of 1793." Comment is needless.

⁵ Dufferin, *Speeches*, p. 43. "a desire to do equal justice between the two parties." "The Government of India distributes justice and that is what we have endeavoured to do in the Bill."

whom are creations of the British Government, form one of the classes who pay a comparatively small part of their surplus towards the upkeep of the State while the cultivators pay the most.¹ This explains the cause for the occasional solicitude of the Government towards the privileged tenants. We do not see in this the distributive justice that Dufferin spoke of

¹ Report of the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee Report 1924-1925, vol 1, p 82

Indian Statutory Commission, vol 1, pp 334-35 "We refer not only to the great disparity in the incomes of different classes of people in India but to the grave inequalities which as it seems to us prevail in the distribution of taxation. A poor cultivator, who not only pays to the state a substantial portion of his income from land, but also bears the burden of duties on sugar, kerosene oil, salt, and other articles of general consumption, seems to receive very different treatment from the big Zamindar or landholder in areas where 'permanent settlement' prevails, who owns extensive estates, for which he may pay to the state a merely nominal charge fixed over a century ago and declared to be unalterable for ever, while his agricultural income is totally exempt from income tax. Moreover, there are no death duties in India."

Indian Mercantile Class

THE next class is the Indian Mercantile one. Its organization, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, the oldest of its kind in India, dates from 1887¹ In 1888 the Marquis of Lansdowne acclaimed the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce as the "accredited exponents of the views of the native mercantile classes of Bengal " In 1910 Lord Hardinge testified to the fact that the Chamber was consulted by the Government on questions affecting not only the commercial community, but also the general welfare of the people.² This was followed by several organizations in various parts of India, like the Association of Landholders, European Chambers of Commerce, Trades Associations, and other Indian Associations Later came the Employers' and Employees Associations

This mercantile class is not the creation of British rule in India. Part of it came into existence after the industrial revolution.

¹ Bengal National Chamber of Commerce—Report of the Committee for the year 1931 p. 1

² Ibid., p. 4 We must not put too much reliance on this official statement "General Welfare of the People," as the subsequent analysis shows.

The Genesis of British Policy of Counterpoise and Concession

THE British have adroitly used these organizations of various classes and interests for specific purposes. They were regarded as possible constituencies for representation of interests, classes, and communities.¹ This slogan of pacifying the various interests, classes, and communities became a dominant factor in British policy. It arose in 1857, and was formulated with a double-edged purpose. to concede and to counterpoise, to concede to the claims of the emergent classes, interests of communities, and to counterpoise one against the other. The strength of the Indian National Congress, the official theory of continuity, fear and panic caused by the Mutiny, crystallized this slogan into a major political idea. When Minto came to office in 1905, he found a ready-made idea, which he used to counter the ideas of the Congress

In Syed Ahmed Khan's² opinion the original cause of the Mutiny was the non-admission of an Indian into the Legis-

¹ *Indian Statutory Commission*, vol II, p 187 "The object of all representation was to enlarge the field of public discussion in order that the various administrations might be able to shape their course with the advantage of a distinct knowledge of the wishes and feelings of the communities with whose interests they might be required to deal"

Mary Minto, op cit, p 373 In a footnote Mary Minto wrote "It should be noted that the Minto-Morley Reforms advocated in 1909 'Representative Government' The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919 proposed 'Responsible Government' " I doubt the latter part of this statement

Cambridge History of India, vol VI, p 543 Lord Dufferin said that representatives would consider themselves "responsible to enlightened and increasing sections of their own countrymen"

✓ ² He had a long career in the judicial service of the United Provinces, devoted himself to promoting the study of English by Moslems, and had been a nominated member of the Imperial Legislative Council (*Cambridge History of India*, vol VI, p 541) His life-work was the advancement of the Mohammedans on broad constitutional lines (*Journal*, October 3, 1906—Mary Minto, op cit, p 56)

lative Council.¹ The Government learnt this lesson well. Before Khan, the idea of taking counsel with the leading Indians was first urged upon the home Government by Dalhousie in 1853. This was rejected, but conceded in 1861, under the pressure of the Mutiny. Khan's suggestion was put into practice in 1862, when the Maharaja of Patiala, the Rajah of Benares, and Sir Dinkar Rao were nominated to the Council.²

The next group of nominations consisted of three great Zamindars. These and their like were reinforced by retired officials like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. In the eighties we begin to find merchants, editors, and lawyers represented in the Council. Representation so far was by classes, particularly the upper classes, and not by communities. This shows clearly that the Government of India favoured the upper classes in the beginning. As other classes emerged, as their political movement developed, the Government extended their base of nomination to them. A graph of nomination can be drawn as

✓ G. F. I. Graham, *Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan*, p. 39. All I wish to prove here is that such a step (admission of Indians to Councils) is not only advisable but absolutely necessary and that the disturbances are due to the neglect of such a measure."

✓ Page 37 "The evils which resulted to India from the non-admission of natives into the Legislative Council of India were various. The government could never know the inadvisability of the laws and regulations which it passed. It could never hear as it ought to have heard the voice of the people on such a subject. The people had no means of protesting against what they might feel to be a foolish measure or of giving public expression to their own wishes. But the greatest mischief lay in this that the people misunderstood the views and the intentions of the government."

* Dodwell, *op cit.*, p. 237. Let us look at the class composition of these men. *Maharaja of Patiala* the Sikh chief who at the time of the Mutiny had taken so resolute a line in favour of the English Government. *Raja of Benares* quasi-master of a Zamindari of almost princely rank. *Sir Dinkar Rao* 1819-1896, Minister of Holkar's State.

Dodwell, *op cit.*, pp. 237-38. For an account of his life, see Mitra, *Anglo-Indian Studies*, pp. 386-96.

During the Mutiny of Gwalior contingent Rao's counsels were strongly in favour of British interests. In 1859 he received Lord Canning's thanks and was granted an estate in the Benares district for his services. In 1861 he was nominated to be an additional member of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. In a memorandum (dated March 2, 1862) to the Viceroy he stated that he saw advantages in the appointment of independent Hindu princes and chiefs to the Legislative Councils.

M. W. Burway *Life of Sir Dinkar Rao*, Bombay 1907 pp. 68-69

it were beginning with the Rajahs, Zamindars, retired officials, merchants, and professional classes. The idea of communities did not yet come up for political recognition

In 1886 Lord Dufferin proposed further liberalization of the administration by concessions to the educated political intelligentsia, which he characterized as "a microscopic minority."¹ He at the same time deprecated the idea that by such liberalization the Government of India was contemplating an approach to English parliamentary government and an English constitutional system.² He held the view that in a country like India no principle of representation other than by interests was practically possible.³ In 1892 Lord Lansdowne wrote that each important class should have the opportunity of making its views known in Council by the mouth of some member specially acquainted with them.⁴ While Dufferin expressed the view of the representation of interests, Lansdowne expressed the view

¹ Sir A. Lyall, *Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, 1905, vol. II, p. 151 "To give quickly and with a good grace whatever may be possible or desirable to accord, to announce that the concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten or fifteen years, and to forbid mass meetings and incendiary speechifying"

Dufferin, *Speeches* (February 16, 1887), p. 159 He still regarded the Congress as representing "a microscopic minority" See *Speeches* (November 30, 1888), p. 239

But Morley dissented from Dufferin Viscount Morley, *Indian Speeches, 1907-1909*, London, 1909 (on presenting the Indian Budget, House of Commons, June 6, 1907) "You often hear people talk of the educated section of the people of India, as a mere handful, an infinitesimal fraction. So they are in numbers, but it is fatally idle to say that this infinitesimal fraction does not count"

Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, London, 1920, p. 42 "Dufferin confidentially sent home proposals for liberalizing the Councils, which," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "is all that the reasonable leaders, even of the most advanced section of young India, dream of!"

² *Cambridge History of India*, vol. VI, p. 542

Dufferin, *Speeches* (November 30, 1884), pp. 237-38

³ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 227

⁴ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, pp. 53-61

Indian Statutory Commission Report, vol. IV, p. 127 "The joint authors have quoted Lord Dufferin's view of the position as it then existed when he brought forward his proposals that the wishes and feelings of the people of the country should be expressed not, as at present through self-constituted, self-nominated, and therefore untrustworthy channels, but by the mouths of those who will be legally constituted representatives of various interests and classes"

of the representation of classes. Both at this time meant the same thing. Representative government appeared to Lord Salisbury admirable only when all those who were represented desired much the same thing and had interests which were tolerably analogous. He held that the chief need was a fuller representation of all interests.¹ The result was the passage of the Council Act of 1892. Lord Curzon, while introducing the Bill,² described it as in no sense creating a parliamentary system.³ The Bill was passed, and the Government of India was informed that Parliament intended that "Where corporations have been established with definite powers, upon a recognized administrative basis, or where associations have been formed upon a substantial community of legitimate interests, professional, commercial, or territorial, the Governor-General and the local governors might find convenience and advantage in consulting from time to time such bodies, and in entertaining at their discretion an expression of their views and recommendations with regard to the selection of members in whose qualifications they might be disposed to confide."⁴ This is the clear statement of the British political theory of pacifying the communities, classes, and interests.

With the passing of the Act of 1892, the provincial legislative councils were constituted with a view to making them representative of the more important communities, classes, and interests. *But the regulations did not themselves recognize communal divisions*.⁵ The Government of India defined for each province the classes which were of sufficient importance to require representation. In the province of Bengal, those which the Government of India considered should require representation comprised communities like Hindus, Moslems, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans, classes like the urban, rural, and professional ones, and interests like the commercial and

¹ *Cambridge History of India* vol. vi p. 543

² Ronaldshay Curzon, vol. I p. 190. "I have so far been lucky in my parliamentary work, particularly with a bill called the India Councils Act which I had to introduce and pilot through the House of Commons."

³ Hansard, March 28, 1892 p. 57 (fourth series, vol. III)

Quoted in Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 69 in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. IV p. 128

⁵ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. IV p. 129

the trading ones.¹ At this stage we get a glimpse into the nature of classification of communities by the Government of India, into Hindus, Moslems, Europeans, and Anglo-Indians. But the despatch from the Secretary of State for India to the Governor-General of India in Council spoke of the representation of the views of different *races*, *classes*, and *localities*.² The phrase "communities, ~~classes~~, and interests" was used differently in the despatch as "races, classes, and localities." Is the word "community" synonymous with "races" and "interests" with "localities"? Or do they mean differently? We will examine this in detail later on.

Ever since the introduction of the elective system had been first discussed, the Government had held the view that representation by classes and interests was the only practicable way of giving effect to the elective principle.³ This conception was strongly emphasized in the reforms proposals of 1907.⁴ This takes us to Minto

¹ Shafaat Ahmed Khan, "Explanatory Note" in Indian Statutory Commission, vol 11, p 319. See also Indian Statutory Commission, vol 14, pp 126-29

² No 15 Legislative dated June 30, 1892. The whole document is published in P Dumbell, *Loyal India—A Survey of 70 Years, 1858-1928*, London, 1930, pp 31-34

³ Dodwell, *A Sketch of the History of India*, p 283. Indian Statutory Commission Report, vol 14, p 129. "The elective principle appeared under the guise of nomination upon recommendation."

Cf Dodwell, *op cit*, p 243. "The Act of 1892 further empowered the Governor-General in council to make rules under which future nominations should be made. Under this last clause lurked the introduction of a new principle in Indian politics. Till then non-officials had found a place in the legislative councils exclusively as nominees of the Governor-General, or of the governors and lieutenant-governors of provinces. Now Indians themselves were to have a say in their selection. The rules made under the Act provided that while the Governor-General should nominate ten additional members on his own responsibility, he would nominate one on the recommendation of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce and four more on the recommendation of the non-officials in the provincial councils, themselves largely selected by municipalities, university senates and commercial bodies."

⁴ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, pp 64-65. Minto's Government followed this predominant opinion.

Bases of British Policy of Counterpoise and Coercion

It is said that England went to India not for the good of India, but for its goods It went to India as a hawker and a peddler The East India Company, acting on behalf of the English moneyocracy, conquered India in the pursuit of trade. "How came it," wrote Marx, that English supremacy was established in India? The paramount power of the great Mogul was broken by the Mogul viceroys The power of the viceroys was broken by the Maharattas The power of the Maharattas was broken by the Afghans and while all were struggling against all the British rushed in and was enabled to subdue them all A country not only divided between the Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste, a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members Such a country and such a society were they not the predestined prey of conquest?"¹

This conquest effected a social revolution in India. 'England, it is true,' wrote Marx, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But this is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution."²

England fulfilled "a double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerating, the annihilating of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundation of Western society in Asia.' It broke up the village communities, uprooted

¹ Karl Marx "The Future Results of British Rule in India" in *Letters on India* p 55

² Karl Marx "The British Rule in India" in *Letters on India* p 9

the native industry, and destroyed the old Indian feudal land system. "The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that of destruction." Nevertheless regeneration had begun Political unity of India was the first condition of its regeneration¹ Next began the so-called development of India This is of vital importance for the moneyocracy.² Irrigation, internal communications, and railway developments became a necessity. But the full benefits of this development could not be reaped by the Indians until England is thrown out of India.³

This early mercantile stage of capitalism coincided with the work of Clive and Hastings. The Mutiny interrupted its course for a while. With the epoch of industrial capitalism began the period of the so-called "development" of India Political consolidation reached its zenith by the end of the nineteenth century With the epoch of imperialism began a period of new imperial policy towards India. A feature of this period was the development of those branches of industry necessary for supporting British imperialism. Simple industry began to develop With this developed also a liberal imperialist policy It is the amalgam of coercion, counterpoise, concession, and strengthening of paramountcy.

British policy in India is a political expression of the mercantile, industrial, and monopolist phases of capitalism The pessimistic school reflected the ominous calm before the Mutiny. The destructive and regenerating phases of British Capitalism, coupled with general discontent among various classes over wide areas, produced the Mutiny The liberal circumscribed school reflected the development period, and in some respects even preceded it The imperialist school carried the traditions of Clive and Hastings through all phases of capitalism even into its present decaying stage Concessions

¹ Karl Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India, in *Letters on India*, p 56

² Romesh Chandra Dutt, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, London, 1906, p 184 "British merchants and manufacturers always desired India to be well governed" p 185 "The administrative policy of the British Empire is determined, not by philosophers and statesmen, but by merchants, manufacturers"

³ Karl Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India" in *Letters on India*, p. 61

and counterpoises varied with the fortunes of capitalism plus the need to placate the rising classes in India. It was at this stage of the epoch of imperialism that Minto came to India.¹

¹ Minto was Viceroy of India during the years 1905-1910. The Minto-Morley Reforms were granted in 1909.

Minto and the Objective Elements of the Situation

It was into this world of classes and their organizations, where the theory of "communities, classes, and interests" was in the making as the classes and interests arose, into the world of colonial-capitalist development that Minto came to India in 1905.

Lord Morley, turning to Burke's letter to Gilbert Elliot, found this. "No politician can make a situation His skill consists in his well playing the game dealt to him by fortune, and following the indications given him by nature, times, and circumstances"¹ Minto agreed with Morley that "this sage reflection" was true He said

"I know very well that we must accept things as they are I believe that to be ready to do so is the secret of good judgment There is no such mistake to my mind as to be perpetually cavilling at things as we find them. We must make the best of them I believe it to be impossible to stop great forward political movements, one but can direct them"²

Both of them admitted the determinism of the situation³ and the need for conscious direction What was the situation—objective and subjective—that Minto inherited? What was the conscious direction of Minto? The origins of the theory of communal representation lie in correct answers to these questions

Briefly stated, the objective elements of the situation were, according to Minto, seditious Dufferin had already noted mass

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 241 (Morley to Minto, June 17, 1908)

² Mary Minto, op cit, p 243 (Minto to Morley, July 8, 1908)

³ Cf Mary Minto, op cit, p 362 (*Journal*, Dec 21, 1909, Calcutta)

"I see in English papers that Mr Ramsay MacDonald, on his return from his Indian tour, addressed a meeting of the Labour Party at Leicester and in the course of his speech said that 'No single man was responsible for the unrest in India'"

meetings and incendiary speechifying of the Congress.¹ Lord Curzon also noted the same phenomenon. Minto asked Morley for more repressive measures to cope with sedition. Morley at first pursued a policy of caution. The Bill for the regulation of public meetings was passed.² Anarchist conspiracies took place culminating in the Muzaffarpur murders.³ Under pressure of these events on June 8, 1908, the Explosives and Newspaper Bills were passed.⁴ Student classes began to participate in these organizations.⁵ Minto resorted to special legislation. It took the form of a Bill entitled the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which provided 'for the more speedy trial of certain offences, and for the prohibition of associations dangerous to the public peace.'⁶ He resorted to deportation without trial with the concurrence of Morley.⁷ Morley insisted later upon release of the deportees. Minto refused to yield to Morley's persuasions. Morley gave way.⁸ Further bomb outrages and the Nasik murders seemed to strengthen the Viceroy's contention. Martial law was talked of.⁹ Minto was

¹ As a contrast see the position of the movement during 1848-1880. Sir Richard Temple, *The Story of My Life*, London, 1896 vol. II p. 77. A movement, which subsequently became known as that of the Indian National Congress, had begun in my time and had advanced a certain way. But it had hardly approached the lengths which it seems to have reached later on."

² Mary Minto, op. cit. pp. 144-54 (see for the correspondence between Minto and Morley on the political situation)

³ Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 232 (Minto to Morley May 13 1908) "The conspiracy as far as we know at present, aims at the overthrow of the British Raj."

⁴ Ibid. p. 254 (Minto to Morley November 30, 1908) "I had long interviews yesterday with Sinha and Mukerji. They said practically the same thing and namely that this seditious organization is confined to the student class and to those who have passed through the universities."

⁵ Mary Minto, op. cit. p. 256.

⁶ Mary Minto, op. cit. pp. 122-34 (for correspondence on unrest and the Punjab Colonization Bill)

⁷ Mary Minto op. cit. pp. 325-37 (see for the correspondence between Minto and Morley on the question of deportees)

⁸ Banerje *A Nation in the Making* p. 252 "By instinct and by conviction Lord Morley was opposed to a policy of repression but was driven to it by the overwhelming pressure of circumstances."

⁹ Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 369 (Minto to Morley January 13 1910) "There is a general demand in the air for strong measures, and the only definite explanation of the term which has reached me so far is the proclamation of 'martial law'. O. Moore Cressh recently advocated it, but has

faced with an anarchist movement,¹ and its attempts to educate the Indian Army to its cause.² In despair and helplessness a few of the intelligentsia turned to bombs and murders. Curzon somewhat naively contrasted the absence of terrorism in his day with its appearance in Minto's times.³ But Minto exercised a strong hand. He dismissed the idea that the Reforms were a surrender to agitation.⁴ He followed the traditional British policy of conceding reforms in the midst of repression.⁵ He believed that England held her position in India by the sword.⁶ He wanted to continue this repressive policy till the announcement of the Reforms, as he saw no contradiction between reforms and repression. Meanwhile, Morley did not relax his insistence on the release of the deportees. But it was in vain. The turmoil of the general election at home aided his insistence.⁷ At the opportune moment of announcing the Reforms, Minto released the deportees.⁷ At last Morley won.

now given it up, though the possibility of it was discussed in council. It is absolutely uncalled for, and I only mention it to you to illustrate the suggestions that are hurled at my head."

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 108

² Mary Minto, op cit, p 122 (Minto to Morley, March 5, 1907) "This is the first authentic information that has reached me of an attempt to corrupt the Native Army. The circular emanated from some natives of India now in the United States."

³ Mary Minto, op cit, p 369 (Morley to Minto, January 6, 1910) "Curzon, rather unworthily, in one of his multitudinous orations, defended himself by contrasting the absence of terrorism in his day with its appearance in ours."

For an account of the conspiracies and murders during Minto's times, see Sedition Committee Report 1918, paras 7-17. Also see S N Banerje, *A Nation in the Making*, pp 248-56.

⁴ Mary Minto, op cit, p 284 (Minto to Morley, March 17, 1909) "there seems to be an idea in England that our Reforms are a surrender to agitation. There never was such nonsense. Our scheme was on the stocks long before we had any warning of immediate danger. To give way to agitation was out of the question, though it was evident enough that the small-minded people would accuse one of doing so if they got the chance."

⁵ Mary Minto, op cit, p 305 (Minto to Morley, May 13, 1909) "We hold our position by the sword."

⁶ It was not instinct that led Morley to champion the cause of the deportees. It was the turmoil of general election at home.

Cf Mary Minto, op cit, p 379 (Minto to Morley, February 9, 1910) "Ramsay MacDonald is reported to have said that if the deportees were not released His Majesty's Government would not get a single vote from the Labour Party."

⁷ Mary Minto, op cit, pp 377-80

II

Minto and the Subjective Elements of the Situation

ALONG with this inheritance of the objective elements of the situation, Minto inherited its subjective elements. His reading and direction of it have exact counterparts in those of the previous viceroys. He pursued the policy of the same strong hand, of the same grudging concessions, of the same distrust and confidence. He combined in himself the strands of an old imperialist and a "cheap" concessionist.

What was Minto's reading of the situation? He found that the educated classes were becoming a power.¹ He found the need for the admission of Indians to a direct share in the administration of the country.² This idea, as we noted before, was an old one. It was started with the civil service. It was the chief idea of the "old politicals."³ It was later extended to legislative and provincial councils. During the time of Minto-Morley it was extended to executive councils and the India Council. The sphere of association of Indians with the administration was widened in his time. This was an answer, as Minto wrote, to the accusation against the narrow character of Indian bureaucracy.⁴ He wrote to Morley "My firm belief is that the only way we can save India from a tremendous convulsion,

¹ Mary Minto, op cit., p 104 (Minto to Morley February 27 1907)

² Mary Minto, op cit., p 101 (Minto to Morley September 12th) p 217 (Minto to Morley September 2, 1908)

³ Sir Alfred Lyall was another member of that band of "old politicals." He wrote in 1882 "I have just appointed a native judge to the Allahabad High Court the first who has ever been sent there. I want to push on the native wherever I can—our only chance of placing government here upon a broad and permanent basis." He said the same thing to his sister Mrs Webb. "I intend to push forward the native, quietly and judiciously all through my time. What I want is time to acquire wide influence among the natives of the North West Provinces, so as to carry them with me in anything I attempt." Quoted in Sir Mortimer Durand, *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Cowyn Lyall* London, 1913 pp 261-62

⁴ Mary Minto, op cit. p 101

which may result, I know not how, is in recognizing the right of the Indian gentlemen, loyal at the present moment, to a greater share in the government of the country. If we don't do so, we shall ere long have a force opposed to us of a strength of which we have had no previous experience."¹ Here Minto repeated the sentiments of Elphinstone in almost the same words.²

In this extension of the sphere of association of Indians with the administration Minto and Morley were guided by several motives. Lord Morley believed that what the Congressmen really wanted infinitely more than political reforms was access to the higher administrative posts of all sorts.³ The admission of an Indian, whether to the Viceroy's or Secretary of State for India's Council, would be "the cheapest concession,"⁴ "the best answer that could be made to Congress demands."⁵

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 132 (Minto to Morley, May 16, 1907)

Morley held the same opinion. Morley, *Indian Speeches*, p 23 "This educated section is making and will make all the difference. That they would sharply criticize the British system of government has been long known. It was inevitable. There need be no surprise in the fact that they want a share in the emoluments of administration. Their means—many of them—are scanty, they have little to lose and much to gain from far-reaching changes."

Minto wrote again "The more I see the more convinced I am that we cannot continue to govern India with any hopes of tranquillity until we give her educated classes a chance of a greater share in the government of the country."

² Cited already. See J S Cotton, *M Elphinstone*, p 187 (Elphinstone wrote to Munro in 1822)

³ Mary Minto, op cit, p 100 (Morley to Minto, August 2, 1906)

⁴ Mary Minto, op cit, p 101 (Morley to Minto, November 23, 1906)

⁵ Mary Minto, op cit, p 102 (Minto to Morley, January 2, 1906) At this time (February 27, 1907) the members of the Viceroy's Council were against admission of Indians to the Viceroy's Council. Minto wrote to Morley thus "The reasons against it stated by Members of Council are generally narrow, based almost entirely on the assumption that it is impossible to trust a native in a position of great responsibility, and that the appointment of a native member is simply a concession to Congress agitation." Mary Minto, op cit, pp 103-4. But Minto and Morley recognized that their reforms were a concession to Congress agitation.

When Sinha was appointed Member of the Viceroy's Council, and a few months after, when he was about to resign, Mary Minto wrote (*Journal*, February 8, 1910) "The native member on the Viceroy's Council has been a concession to the Indians." Mary Minto, op cit, p 37

Dodwell, op cit, p 288 "Minto himself certainly did not rank very highly in these attempts to improve the legislative councils. They were concessions to educated opinion, but they were not the real thing."

Another motive which induced Minto to suggest extension of the sphere of admission of Indians to the administration was to rally the moderates¹ In this, both Minto and Morley followed the advice of the 'old political.'²

Both Minto and Morley repeatedly stressed their view that India was unfit for parliamentary government.³ They merely

¹ Mary Minto, op cit., p 322 (Minto wrote to Morley October 21 1909) "One of the great hopes of our Reform scheme was to rally the moderates."

After the Reforms were introduced Minto found that his object was realized. At the dinner of the United Service Club (October 15, 1910) Minto said in the course of his speech "moderate political thought has throughout India rallied to their support." Mary Minto, op cit. p 415

The moderate character of Sinha, who was admitted as a legal member to the Viceroy's Council, can be judged from this—Mary Minto, op cit. p 298 (*Journal*, May 15, 1909) "He discussed the impossibility of any Indian rule without British protection. If the English left India in a body he said, 'we should have to telegraph to Aden to get them to return. India would be a state of chaos in a couple of days' "

² *Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin*, p 425 (Lord Elgin wrote to Sir Charles Wood, Calcutta, December 23 1862) My study always is to keep those who *profess* moderate and reasonable views right and to prevent them from going over arms and baggage to the enemy by taking for granted that they mean what they profess, and when they propose objectionable remedies, arguing against them on their own premises. Some, of course, would rather abandon their sound premises than their illogical conclusions, but a large number come over to the right side when they find that the consideration of their alleged grievances is approached without any prepossession against them. Of course, this is all a matter of tact, and cannot be reduced to any definite formula."

Mary Minto op cit., p 99 (Morley to Minto, August 2 1906) Morley made no secret of conviction to Gokhale that self-government for India, for many a long day to come, long beyond the short space of time that may be left to him was a mere dream

Ibid., p 217 (Minto to Morley September 2 1908) From the very commencement of our deliberations I have always said that whilst recognizing that the peoples of India are not as yet nearly ripe for anything approaching our ideas of parliamentary representation, we must be prepared to give to individuals of known loyalty and ability a greater share in the government of their country "

Ibid., p 217 (Morley to Minto, September 10, 1908) "And what does he (a certain high official) mean by his talk of the expediency of the government saying 'once for all' that India is not going to be made a self-governing colony? As if I as the responsible spokesman of the government, had not said it a score of times."

Ibid., p 305 (Minto to Morley May 13, 1909) "Of course Swraj is an impossibility in our time "

Ibid., p. 372 (*Journal* January 25 1910), Minto's speech in the Council Chamber: "We have distinctly maintained that representative government,

echoed the sentiments of Ripon, Dufferin, Lansdowne,¹ Curzon,² Cross, Salisbury, and others.³ They also adopted the old principle—the principle of representation of communities, classes, and interests. They simply broadened the principle authorized by the Council Act of 1892⁴ and applied it to a new situation.

They found that under the Act of 1892, the members recommended for appointment by the local boards had consisted in the main of lawyers "Out of forty-three members elected by the district municipalities forty have been barristers."⁵

in its western sense, is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of eastern populations, that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation, that the safety and welfare of the country must depend on the supremacy of British administration and that supremacy can, in no circumstances, be delegated to any kind of representative assembly "

Minto "Since I have been in India I have talked with many such men, chief landowners and others, and I have found them almost universally opposed to an increase of representative government, but strongly pressing the claims and capabilities of their countrymen to share in the highest executive councils of their country " Quoted in *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p 877

✓ Lord Morley "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system of India, I for one would have nothing to do with it " Quoted in *Indian Statutory Commission*, vol iv, p 137

✓ Earl of Birkenhead, *Frederick Edwin Earl of Birkenhead, the Last Phase*, London, 1935, p 245, we find him writing to Lord Reading on December 4, 1924 " to me it is frankly inconceivable that India will ever be fit for dominion self-government " Also pp 258-59 (May 1928)

✓ ¹ Morley, *Indian Speeches* (Madras Natesan, second edition), p 156 "I think you find that we have been guided in our policy by an expansion of the principles that were recognized so far back as 1861, and by the noble Marquis of Lansdowne in 1892 He said he hoped we had succeeded in giving to our proposals of Legislative Council reform sufficient to secure a satisfactory advance in the representation of the people on the Council and to give effect to the principle of selection, as far as possible to such sections of the community as might be capable of assisting us in that matter " That is all No self-government is implied in this

² Curzon's speech in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill of 1892, pp 233-34 (In P Mukherji, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, second edition, 1918, vol 1, a source book)

³ Lord Minto's Minute (being an extract from the proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General, dated the 25th of January 1910) of August 1906, p 252 (in Mukherji, op cit)

⁴ Minto's speech in the Council Chamber Mary Minto, op cit , p 372 (*Journal*, January 25, 1910)

⁵ Indian Statutory Commission, vol iv, p 130 Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para 70

They tried to set this right by direct nomination. Yet lawyers succeeded in obtaining over a third of the seats on the provincial councils. Schoolmasters and lawyers, between them, formed 40 per cent of the Imperial Council. They did not deny that the professional classes were entitled to a share of representation proportioned not merely to their numbers, which were small, but to their influence, which was large and tended continually to increase.¹

One great question was how this situation could be avoided and a counterpoise introduced. They therefore proposed to invite the landed and the industrialist classes to become fellow-workers with them in British administration, while at the same time recognizing the claims of educational advance.² They tried to bring into political activity those forces of Indian opinion which could not be supposed to lean towards the political views of the Congress. The agricultural classes, from the ryots to the great landlords, had at the time no mouthpiece by which they could make known their views and desires. The mercantile and trading classes were politically quiescent. The Moslems had taken no part in the recent agitations. It was therefore clearly desirable that they should support these classes which might constitute a counterpoise to the Congressmen.

In accordance with these views a circular despatch was issued on August 24, 1907,³ for the purpose of eliciting both

¹ Papers relating to an Imperial Advisory Council and Provincial Advisory Councils. The enlargement of the Legislative Councils and the discussion of Budgets. Circular dated Simla, August 24 1907. From the Secretary to the Government of India Home Department to Local Governments and Administrators. Cd. 3710, 1907 p. 7.

² Minto's speech in the Council Chamber. Mary Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 372 (*Journal* January 25, 1910), Cd. 3710, *op. cit.* p. 7. "But they are not prepared to allow them (the legal profession which dominated the councils and the Congress) a virtual monopoly of the power exercised by the councils, and they believe that the soundest solution of the problem is to be found in supplying the required counterpoise to their excessive influence by creating an additional electorate recruited from the landed and monied classes."

Ibid., p. 3. "No scheme of constitutional reform would meet the real requirements of the present time which did not make adequate provision for representing the landed aristocracy of India, the mercantile and industrial classes."

³ Cd. 3710 cited fully. The Government of India issued the circular to local governments for replies (see replies of the local governments, Cd. 4435-6 1908, two parts). The local governments—governors and

"public opinion" and official views. Considerable emphasis was laid upon the need of giving the widest possible representation to the various classes, races, and interests of the country. The creation of special electorates for the landed class and Moslems was suggested. An over-elaborated scheme was published proposing to assign specific numbers of seats to each race, caste, and religion, with special electorates in each case. This detailed proposal was abandoned. Being directed against the monopoly of the professional classes, the Government was certain of attack by them, they being the only section of the community at all vocal. But this did not deter the Government from its pursuit of the policy of counterpoise. It once again affirmed that "representation by classes and interests is the only practical method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the Indian legislative councils. Special provision was therefore proposed. Landed and Moslem constituencies should be established and means taken to secure for each important class in the country at least one member well acquainted with its views. Morley attempted to overcome the difficulties raised by special electorates by putting forward an alternative plan. This, too, was abandoned. In the end, the idea prevailed to obtain special representation for the landholders of each province, for commerce, and for the Mohammedans. These it was hoped would form the wished-for counterpoise to the professional classes.

We now see that for both his conscious direction of the situation and the ideas he adopted to combat the ideas of the Congress, Minto was indebted to his predecessors. To sum up, the ideas he adopted to meet the situation were five

- 1 He held the idea that legislation must be slow and gradual. The old politicals popularized this idea. Elphinstone remarked, "Legislation for India should be well considered, gradual, and slow." Sir Charles Wood spoke of it on the occasion of the

collectors—issued the circular in turn to Maharajas, Rajahs, Zamindars and other chiefs and territorial magnates. They also elicited information from individual members and associations like the British Indian Association, chambers of commerce, landholders' associations, Mohammedan associations, and so on. Nothing was done to elicit information regarding the masses

passing of the Council Act of 1861.¹ Lord Curzon voiced the same sentiment on the occasion of the passing of the Act of 1892.² The same idea was expressed by the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform.³

2 He held that repression and concessions were not inconsistent.⁴ Morley held the same view.⁵ Today it is the accredited British policy in India.⁶ "Circumscribe your concessions with as many safeguards as possible consistent with imperial interests" is the motto, as Lytton would say, of British policy towards India. The old politicals phrased this neatly. Elgin and Lytton advocated the same method. The new Constitution for India bristles with safeguards of several types,⁷ so circum-

¹ Speech of Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons, June 6, 1861. Quoted in Dumbell *Loyal India*, p. 29.

² Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, fourth series, vol. III, p. 66. Curzon "The government assumes the responsibility of stating that in their opinion the time has not come when representative institutions, as we understand the term, can be extended to India. We have only arrived at it by slow degrees."

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report also remarked that advance must be gradual (p. 126).

³ Report, op. cit., p. 8, para. 15. Constitutional development should be evolutionary.

⁴ Mary Minto, op. cit. p. 414 (Minto's speech at the United Service Club *Journal*, October 15, 1910). "The Government of India had to play a double part. With one hand to dispense measures calculated to meet novel political conditions, with the other hand sternly to eradicate political crimes."

Mary Minto op. cit., p. 253 (Minto to Morley May 28, 1908). "No one is more anxious for reforms than I am, and as I have often said, there is a new spirit in the Indian political atmosphere but at the same time, government by the strong hand is what appeals to the majority of the different populations of this country."

Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 249. Minto wrote to Morley September 14, 1908. "I don't see that the exercise of the strong hand need, in any way affect our reforms, quite the contrary."

Mary Minto op. cit., p. 346 (*Journal* November 6, 1909). The sycophant Nizam wrote to Minto. "I am a great believer in conciliation and repression going hand in hand to cope with the present condition of India."

⁵ Morley *Indian Speeches* (Natesan, second edition), p. 153.

For the continuance of the dual policy see *India 1932* pp. 1-3. Page 2. A resolute stand against civil disobedience on the one hand, and steady progress towards the framing and introduction of a reformed constitution on the other were integral parts of a single policy."

⁷ Report Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, para. 21.

p. 12.

R. P. Dutt "The Meaning of the Indian Constitutional Proposals" (in

scribed that it would appear as though the advice of Lytton and Elgin were carried out

3. Distrust of the Indian, purely a political prejudice, has to be reconciled with confidence in him. Otherwise, the few concessions themselves cannot be given. This irreconcilable contradiction leads to a policy of make-believe reforms. Moreover, as Stalin said in his talk with Wells, in order to maintain their rule the ruling classes of Great Britain have never forsworn small concessions or reforms. These are always circumscribed. They are designed to split the united opposition. *The foundation stone of Indian reform*, wrote Lord Cromer, *must be the steadfast maintenance of British supremacy*¹ Therefore in spite of the reforms, in spite of the enlargement of the councils, the power of the Indians has been nil. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "no reforms have given real political power to the people"² Minto used this idea successfully. He himself thought that concessions did not amount to anything. Minto was not without successors. The Federation has all the earmarks of extension and enlargement, but qualitatively speaking, the powers that the Indian possesses are nil. So much so, the moderates whom the Government always rallied to its cause are at present the severest critics of the Federation.

4. Another motive for these concessions is to rally the moderates and to stem the tide of sedition. Elgin expressed this idea in one of his letters to Sir Charles Wood. Both Minto and Wood used this idea freely. As long as there are concessions, there are always moderates of any party who rally to them³

Inprecor, December 1, 1934, p. 1539) "The most prominent feature of the new constitution is the bristling array of safeguards, special powers, special responsibilities, emergency powers, etc."

¹ Lord Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, Murray, 1909, p. 127

² Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 601

³ *India in 1932-33*, p. 5 "A new alignment of parties seemed to be taking place. On the one hand there was a drawing together of moderate Indians who believed in constitutional methods and the maintenance of some measures of political and social stability."

Ibid, pp. 31-32 "These developments, coupled with the growing demand amongst moderate Congressmen for the resumption of political activity on constitutional lines, indicate the measure of success attained by the White Paper in detaching certain sections of Hindu nationalists from the policy of boycott and non-co-operation."

The present dissensions in the Congress on the question of federation and the silence of the working committee of the Congress on these rumours

Minto's Anxiety to show that the Idea of Reforms Originated with him and in India

MINTO was anxious to show that the so-called reforms, concessions originated with him and in India—and not from Whitehall.¹ He no doubt thought that it would be politically expedient

¹ Minto's Minute on August 1906 (Mukherji, *op cit*, p 251) "It would appear all important that the initiative should emanate from us, that the Government of India should not be put in the position of appearing to have its hands forced by agitation in this country or by pressure from home, that we should be the first to recognize surrounding conditions and to place before His Majesty's Government the opinions which personal experience and a close touch with the everyday life of India entitled us to hold "

Minto's speech to the Imperial Legislative Council on the 27th of March, 1907 Mukerji, *op cit*, p 253 "I have deemed it all-important that the initiative of possible reforms should emanate from us "

Ibid, p 254 "What I would impress on you is that this move in advance has emanated entirely from the Government of India and that we are justly entitled to deny any accusation of an 'inadequate appreciation of the realities of the present situation' "

Circular from the Government of India to the local governments and Administrations, dated Simla the 24th of August, 1907, Cd 3710, 1907, p 3 " the Government of India had of their own initiative taken into consideration the question of giving the people of India wider opportunities of expressing their views on administrative matters "

Minto's speech in the newly constituted Imperial Council (Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 370, *Journal*, January 25, 1910) "(The reforms) had their genesis in a note of my own, addressed to my colleagues in August 1906—nearly three and a half years ago It was based entirely on the views I had myself formed of the position of affairs in India It was due to no suggestions from home Whether it was good or bad I am entirely responsible for it "

Minto begged Morley to make it appear that the reforms originated in India Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 218 (Minto to Morley, September 2, 1908) "I have always laid great stress on the immense political importance from an Indian point of view of the initiation of our reforms emanating from the Government of India, and though I feel that it is more than probable that our final despatch may fall short in its recommendations, I cannot think it would be right for the Government of India to give a blank cheque, so to speak, to be filled in for us at home "

Morley conceded this request Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 219 (Morley to

to make it appear so. In fact, all concessions originated in India, but not with Minto only. The despatches of Dufferin and Lansdowne all originated in India. Whitehall undoubtedly modified the proposals. In times of emergency, circulars no doubt came from Whitehall. In the case of Minto, he himself could see how Morley was compelled reluctantly to accede to his deportation, sedition laws, and communal representation¹. Apart from the question of initiation, and he was not the first to initiate, the content of the policy he pursued was not his. It was a mere continuance of the policies already existing.

Why did Minto insist so much on the fact that concessions originated with him and in India? The real reason is not found in his official answers. Minto, as he himself said, was the successor of a brilliant Viceroy—Curzon.² Curzon, like Clive and Warren Hastings, imperialists themselves, was a victim of the class struggles in England. His Indian administration was not relished at home, especially his policy towards the princes and the professional classes. What Curzon did, Minto strove to undo. He showed a policy of conciliation towards the princes. In his letters and circulars he stressed the needs of the princes and the landlords. He recognized the claims of the educated classes. By such policy he won official approbation. The letters show clearly that Minto was not unaware of this. Lady Minto, whenever she returned to England, always wrote to Lord

Minto, September 24, 1908) "When the time comes for me to send our final decisions, I believe, and see my way to framing my despatch in such a language as will satisfy your most natural and politic desire about the proposals emanating from India."³

Mary Minto, op cit., p 99 (Minto to Morley July 11 1906) "I attach great importance to the official initiative being taken by the Government of India."

Gokhale, too, remarked that Minto was responsible for the reforms. Mary Minto, op cit. p 289 (Budget Speech)

Risley too, was of the same opinion. Mary Minto, op cit., p 221

¹ Mary Minto, op cit., p 327 "To the practice of deportation Morley had reluctantly agreed when the necessity was imminent, but as soon as the atmosphere appeared calmer he rebelled, *demanding with rising vehemence the release of the prisoners.*"

² Mary Minto, op cit., p 9, October 30, 1905 Minto spoke "I am succeeding a brilliant ruler."

Ibid., p 20 He pointed out that he was succeeding a brilliant Viceroy

Ibid., p 49 Minto was very conscious of this. Morley wrote to Minto of Curzon as "our indomitable man, your predecessor."

✓ Minto how approvingly people thought of his work as a contrast to Curzon's.¹ Kitchener and Curzon never got on well. Minto boasted that he got on well with him. He also prided himself that he established friendly relations with the Amir of Afghanistan, where Curzon failed.² Lord Morley stated that Curzon believed in efficiency and not in concessions, while Minto combined both.³ Everything that Minto did was done to show as a contrast to the work of Curzon. He meant to show that he was a good successor to a brilliant Viceroy by doing exactly the opposite of Curzon. This ambition was no doubt the reason which made Minto insist times without number that he was the originator of reforms. He was conscious of the "grandiose" role he thought he was playing. He wrote to his wife on April 9, 1908 "Few people ever succeeded to such a difficult position as I had to deal with when I took over the reins."⁴ He forgot the sage observation he made earlier that it would be impossible to stop great forward political movements. In the personal sphere he took credit for the reforms. In the political sphere he regarded them as "a sop to impossible ambitions." To take credit in one sphere for things which in effect and in other spheres are not regarded as genuine is truly an imperial virtue. It is interesting to observe what Lord Curzon thought of Minto. He was reported to have exclaimed on hearing of Minto's appointment as Viceroy of India "Imagine sending to succeed *me* a gentleman who only jumps hedges."⁵ The result of the desire to jump the hedges left by Curzon and to outshine him was a despatch of reforms. In this he was objectively aided by other factors.

Minto or no Minto, concessions would have come. The political consciousness of the Indian middle class reached its zenith at this time.⁶ The student classes were the most inflam-

¹ *Journal*, August 1906, Mary Minto, op cit, p 52

² Mary Minto, op cit, p 75

³ Lord Morley, *Indian Speeches* (Natesan, second edition), pp 171-72

⁴ Mary Minto, op cit, p 204

⁵ Mary Minto, op cit, p 48

⁶ Minto himself recognized this "Lord Minto then pointed out how the growth of education encouraged by British rule had led to the rise of important classes claiming equality of citizenship, and aspiring to take a larger part in shaping the policy of the government." Quoted in Mary Minto

mable recruits¹ The national revolutionary movement was gaining ground. It was the revolutionizing process at work in India that wrung every political concession from the rulers. It was the same process that wrung the concessions of 1909 from Minto

¹ Sir William Lee Warner's Committee of 1907 discussed in four and a half pages out of its thirty four pages the tendency of many of the students to association with extreme political views. See Malcolm C. C. Seton *India Office* London, 1926, pp 262-63

Lord Morley *Recollections* vol. II p 154 "It was among the students in parts of India that unrest especially prevailed. That class was rapidly drawn into something like a spirit of revolt against the British Government and the movement was unmistakably coming to a head, notably in upper India." Even Gokhale denounced the participation of students in political agitation ✓ (October 9 1909) Verney Lovett op cit. pp 81-82.

Minto's Contribution to the Politics of India

MINTO's contribution to the political situation did not therefore lie in the initiation nor extension of concessions. He contributed two elements to the political situation in India.

The first was not a new one. Minto gave a new turn to the original idea of consulting the various communities, interests, and classes which arose out of the Mutiny. The Government believed that the Mutiny arose out of misrepresentation of facts. Sir Bartle Frere once sighed. "We have no means of knowing except by Rebellion." In order to prevent such misrepresentation in future,¹ in order to win the confidence of various classes and communities, purely for administrative convenience, the Government thought it a wise thing to take into the administration men representative of various interests, classes, and communities. This idea, born of the panic of the Mutiny, took a different turn and meaning in Minto's time. He crystallized it into one of counterpoise, one of offsetting community against community, interest against interest, class against class, and the strengthening of administration.² The chief object, as Minto stated often, of this representation of communities, classes, and interests was to strengthen the administration.

The second contribution was a new one. It was a distinct creation of Minto's with the concurrence of Morley. It was the logical outcome of giving a new turn to the original idea in the

¹ Cd 3710, op cit, p 4 "The Governor-General in Council has been much struck by the difficulty encountered by the governments in India making their measures and motives generally understood, and in correcting erroneous and often mischievous statements of fact or purpose imputed to them."

² Mary Minto, op cit, p 376 (*Journal*, February 8, 1910) Minto spoke in the Legislative Council "increased representation of Indian interests and communities would not weaken but would vastly strengthen British administration."

epoch of the growth of classes. It was the first official recognition of the theory of communal representation. The regulations of the Councils Act of 1892, as we noted before, did not themselves recognize communal divisions. But Minto's reforms of 1909 did. This theory was a residuary legatee of the counterpoise idea. Hitherto the principle of counterpoise was limited to classes and interests of the same faith. The princes, the feudal barons, the privileged tenants, and the mercantile interests were talked of as possible counterpoises to the Congress classes of the same faith. But during the period of the growth of the Moslem professional classes the principle was extended to them. This is the distinct contribution of Minto, that is, the extension of the principle of counterpoise from classes and interests of one faith to those of a different faith. In other words, he extended it to the Moslem professional classes, recognizing them as a separate religious community from the Hindu professional classes. It is here that the origins of the theory of communal representation lie.

Morley's Share in the Initiation of Concessions

WHILE Minto stressed all the time that the concessions originated with him and in India, Morley also claimed his share 'In his *Recollections* he wrote

"As to any idle claim for priority and originality I am well content for my part to leave it where it was put by *The Times* after Lord Minto's death in 1914 'Viceroy and Secretary of State both seem to have come simultaneously to very much the same conclusions, and both worked in a spirit of cordial co-operation to carry out their joint ideas' "1

The Countess of Oxford wrote " although Morley was called Honest John, it was a deceptive description of him His mind and nature . were complicated and subtle . He was too touchy, feminine, self-scanned, and politically jealous to understand anyone so different from himself "2 Vain, egregious, that was Morley Two months before his despatch to Minto on May 17, 1907, he was still wobbling through a sea of prejudices against admission of Indians to his Council This is revealed by his conversation with Austen Chamberlain on March 15, 1907 It was not very surprising therefore that Morley should take credit for ideas that were not his 3 Morley did hardly more than adopt current ideas third-hand through Minto He, himself, on one occasion wrote to Minto

"These proposals, as your Excellency assured your Legislative Council on April 6th, were not framed in accordance

¹ Lord Morley, *Recollections*, vol 11, p 340

² Edited by The Countess of Oxford and Asquith, *Myself When Young*, London, 1938, p 27

³ *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, pp 877-78

Mary Minto, op cit, pp 3-4 "In publishing his *Recollections* in 1917, Lord Morley in his Indian chapters included extracts from his own letters only This was brought to my notice at the time by Lord George Hamilton (late Secretary of State for India) and also by Lord Balfour, both suggested that Minto's letters should be published to complete the story "

with instructions conveyed to you from home. This move in advance has emanated entirely from the Government of India. This initiative you took is a great step towards satisfying the present requirements of the Indian Empire."¹ This was written at the request of Minto to make it appear that the reforms originated in India. At the same time he knew he was writing the truth. The move entirely came from India. In his *Recollections*, when he claimed a share with Minto, he forgot this point. Lord Morley came to the India Office by accident.² His unfamiliarity with India was proverbial.³ Hence, he could not apply his liberalism to the situation in India. Again his liberalism was bookish,⁴ stifled with the party atmosphere of the House of Commons. It was Minto who, in his weekly letters to Morley, pressed upon him the need for concessions. The Liberal Secretary of State agreed with the Conservative Viceroy. The Secretary of State had the Cabinet and the House of Commons with him.⁵ The result was the concessions of 1909. In this Minto, like Morley, adopted current ideas. Nay, he went one step further. He created the contradiction of communal electorates. He dragged the great idolator of Burke and Mill—Morley—to his cause. It is true that Minto could not have achieved the results without the consent of Morley, but consent is not sharing with initiation.

¹ From Lord Morley's reply May 17 1907 to Lord Minto's original despatch on Indian Reforms. Mary Minto op. cit. p. 97; also p. 111.

John Buchan, *Minto*, p. 283. He said to Lady Minto: "I am swimming in a popular tide through victories which are not my own."

² See *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, op. cit. p. 873, for an excellent character sketch of Morley by Dodwell. Also Dodwell, *A Sketch of the History of India*, p. 278. Also John Buchan, *Lord Minto—a Memoir* 1924, pp. 222-23. (Dodwell's character sketch of Morley is similar to Buchan's.)

³ John Buchan, *Minto* p. 281. "Lord Morley had not the gift of quickly acquiring information on unfamiliar topics, he remained oddly ignorant of the details of Indian conditions and to the end made suggestions which were occasionally so beside the mark as to be comic."

⁴ "Mary Minto wrote to Lord Minto of what Morley said to her: 'I am bound to admit that one can learn more from men than from books'" op. cit., p. 117 (April 4, 1907). But Morley never learned from men.

⁵ Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 144 (Morley to Minto, May 24, 1907). "A Viceroy a Cabinet a House of Commons majority all looking in the same direction—such a conjuncture of the powerful elements in the firmament must lead to good unless we bungle."

The Growth of the Moslem Professional Classes

LET us now resume the narrative of the origins of communal representation in more detail, with a view to make the previous generalization clearer. Minto assumed the office of Viceroy and Governor-General of India on November 18, 1905. In August 1906 he appointed a committee out of his Council to consider a number of suggestions for concessions, including among other matters increased representation on the Indian and provincial legislative councils.

While the committee was at work, a deputation representing the Moslems of India waited upon Minto on October 1, 1906, and presented an address through the Aga Khan.¹ To the address was "attached the signatures of nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants, and many other Moslem subjects."² It is with this deputation that the origin of the All-India Muslim League dates.³

This All-India Muslim League was the first organization of the Moslem professional classes. The Moslems took to education very late. In this the Hindus had an earlier start. In the period immediately following the Mutiny, British rule offered fewer compensations to the Moslem than to his Hindu fellow-countryman. A larger proportion of the Moslem than of the Hindu Government servants had elected to join the cause of the mutineers. They were looked upon with suspicion.⁴ Sir

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv, p. 130.

² Minto's reply to the All-India Muslim Deputation. Mary Minto, *op cit*, p. 46 (*Journal*, October 1, 1906).

³ "The deputation was the nucleus from which was formed the influential body known as the All India Muslim League." Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Session 1932-33, vol. 11 C, 1934 (H L 79 (IIc), H C 112 (IIc)), p. 1475.

⁴ Syed Ahmed Khan, *Loyal Muhammadans in India*, 1860. "I must deprecate that whole denunciation against Mohammedans as a race, in which the newspapers are wont to indulge, and which stains the pages of those

Syed Ahmed Khan did all in his power to rehabilitate their reputation.¹ He was bent upon reforming the Mohammedan educational system. He found it to be inadequate and out of date. The Moslem college at Aligarh was his abiding monument.² His influence on his co-religionists was enormous. Shortly before his death, he combated Pan-Islamic sentiment excited by the Greco-Turkish War. He contributed articles to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* denying the pretensions of Sultan Abdul Hamid to the Khalifate, and preaching loyalty to the British rulers of India, even if they "were compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey."³ He thus raised the status of his co-religionists in the estimation of the British rulers. He passed away in 1898.

At this time, the Hindus were making rapid strides both in education and political emoluments. Whenever the door has been widened to admit an Indian to the government of the country the Hindu has always entered before the Moslem. Among Indians who have acted as chief justices, Hindus were the first. Hindus have been the first to fill the responsible positions of advocate-general and standing-counsel. The same was true in the executive branch of the Indian administration. The first Indian placed in charge of a district was a Hindu. Two Hindus have been divisional commissioners, but no Moslem in 1909 had yet reached such a position. The first Indian to enter the Indian civil service was a Hindu, so was the first Indian who was qualified as a barrister. The Moslems followed the Hindu lead, but in small numbers.⁴

These emoluments were due to the fact that the Hindu professional classes had an earlier start and a priority in education. Naturally they were the first to organize themselves into a political body in 1885. The Moslems were late. They organ-

who have written upon the events of 1857." Quoted in Graham, *Syed Ahmed Khan*, p. 61. Ibid., p. 581. During and for long after the Mutiny the Mohammedans were under a cloud. To them were attributed all the horrors and calamities of the terrible time. "

¹ Graham, *Syed Ahmed Khan*, p. 59.

² Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 245 ff. Also Appendix B, pp. 400 ff.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Truth about the Khalafat* Lahore, 1916, second edition, p. 5.

⁴ S. M. Mitra, *Anglo-Indian Studies* p. 316. Though the Hindu has led, the Moslem followed well as the ranks of the educated Moslems swelled.

ized themselves into a political body in 1906. With this the struggle between the two, although of the same class, began because of priority of one to the other. In the early stage of their organization the struggle was mostly between the Moslem and the Hindu professional class, and not against their common class enemy, the British ruling class.

This struggle of the Moslem professional class against the Hindu professional class was not quite universal. Of the seventy-two delegates of the first Indian National Congress in 1885, two were Mohammedans. These were Bombay attorneys. Of the 440 delegates of the second Congress in 1886, 33 were Moslems. At the sixth Congress in 1890, out of 702 delegates 156 were Moslems. At the twenty-first Congress in 1905, out of 756 delegates 17 were Moslems.¹ (The Moslem professional class, though small in number, co-operated with the Hindu professional class.)

This smallness of the Moslem professional class in the Hindu organization was explained variously. This was ascribed to "the present lack of higher education among our Mohammedan brethren." It was also ascribed to the fact that three prominent Calcutta Mohammedans had publicly declared against the Congress, preferring "a policy of confidence in the Government." It was also attributed to their first leader, Syed Ahmed Khan, who by his moderate loyal gospel induced many of his followers to stay away from the Congress.² All this is true, and,

¹ This drop in Moslem membership was due to the anti-partition campaign led by the Congress in that year. In July 1905 the partition of Bengal was announced. This was a move to counter the politically dominant Hindu class by the creation of an Eastern Bengal, which pleased the Moslems. The anti-partition alienated the Moslems. This was reflected in the drop of Moslem membership.

² *Cambridge History of India*, vol vi, p 541. "Muslims joined only in small numbers, and their sympathy as a community with the Congress was weakened by a lecture delivered at Lucknow by the late Sir Syed Ahmed in December 1887, while the Congress was meeting in Madras." Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *On the Present State of Indian Politics*, Allahabad, 1888, p 1. There were present at this meeting "the taluqdars of Oudh, members of the Government services, the Army, the professions of Law, the Press and the Priesthood. Syeds, Shaiks, Moghals and Pathans belonging to some of the noblest families in India, and representatives of every school of thought, from orthodox Sunni and Shiah Maulavis to the young men trained in Indian colleges or in England."

For the whole speech, see pp 2-24

P 14 "is it expedient for you to take part in this business on the

above all, the educated Moslem was a new recruit to the political arena. This accounts for so few Moslems in the Congress. But the Moslem was no less a trader in politics than his Hindu brethren. He had his eyes on Simla or Whitehall for political jobs. He was conscious that he was just free from the taint of mutiny. With the passing away of Syed Ahmed Khan, he had no leader for a time, he was vague and uncertain. His subsequent struggles with the British ruling class, and the revolutionary situation of 1905-1910, led to the organization of his class into an All-India Muslim League in 1906. The subsequent revolutionary situation of 1914-1918 and further experience with the British ruling class, led him into alliance with the Hindu professional class in 1913¹ and 1916.² Thus the history of the Moslem professional class is one of struggle against the Hindu professional class, and also one of the joint struggle, Hindu and Moslem, against the British ruling class. With this emergence of the Moslem professional class begins the immediate story of the origins of communal representation.

absurd supposition that the demands of the Congress would if granted be beneficial for the country? Spurn such foolish notions."

P. 21. Government will most certainly attend to it (jobs as colonels and majors in the army) provided you do not give rise to suspicions of disloyalty."

¹ L. F. R. Williams, "The Indian National Congress in its Various Phases" (in *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cummings, p. 58). In 1913 the Muslim League formally adopted the Congress ideal of self-government for India within the Empire."

Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv pp. 137-38. In the course of the year 1915 there had been a definite rapprochement between some of the leaders of advanced Hindu and advanced Muslim opinion."

² L. F. R. Williams, "The Indian National Congress," op. cit., p. 59. at the 1916 meeting of the Congress, held at Lucknow the left wing predominated, and Besant's project was accepted. The Muslim League joined the Congress in supporting a campaign for Home Rule, based upon an agreed minimum of constitutional advance."

The Extension of the Principle of Representation of Communities, Interests, and Classes to the Moslems

SINCE 1906 the reforms were under discussion ¹ The Moslems were uneasy as to the place they would occupy in the reforms Under the leadership of the Aga Khan they presented an address to Minto Their object was to present their claims, on behalf of 62,000,000 Moslems, to a fair share in any modified system of representation that might be contemplated, the share to be commensurate with their numbers and political importance They stated that the representation hitherto accorded to them, almost entirely by nomination, had been inadequate to their requirements, and had not always with it the approval of those whom the nominees were selected to represent For their representation in the Imperial Legislative Council they sug-

¹ A brief history of the reforms of 1909 is recapitulated here Lord Minto in his minute of August 1906 (Mukherji, p 251) announces his intention of appointing a committee from his council to consider the question of possible reforms

See Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 37 (Minto's speech in the Council Chamber, *Journal*, January 25, 1910) The committee's report was considered by his council and a despatch expressing the views of his colleagues and himself had been forwarded to the Secretary of State (Minto Speech to the Imperial Legislative Council on March 27, 1907 Mukerji, pp 253-54) The Secretary of State for India had since intimated in his speech in the House of Commons on the Indian budget that His Majesty's Government has authorized the Governor-General in Council to consult local governments and invite public opinion on this important subject A circular from the Government of India to the local governments and administrators, dated Simla the 24th of August, 1907, was issued (Cd 3710, 1907) The local governments carried out the instructions with care and thoroughness (replies of the local governments, Cd 4436, 2 parts, 1908) Then Minto sent a despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, No 21 dated October 1, 1908 (Mukherji, pp 271 ff) Lord Morley sent another despatch to the Government of India, No 193 dated London, November 27, 1908, accepting most of the proposals of Minto (Mukherji, pp 310 ff) In between Minto and Morley corresponded often The result was the Reforms Act of 1909

gested that for the purpose of choosing Moslem members, Moslem landowners, lawyers, and merchants, and representatives of every important interest of a status to be subsequently determined by the Government, Moslem members of provincial legislative councils and Moslem fellows of universities should be invested with electoral powers.¹ It is not surprising that a professional class should choose professional class electorates.

In reply, Minto said "I am in accord with you. I can only say to you that the Mohammedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded by any administrative reorganization with which I am concerned." Here originated the concession of communal electorates.

The council's committee gave special attention to the problem of Moslem representation. It found that the Moslems were not sufficiently represented on the existing councils, that the few elected members were not really representative, and that nomination had failed to secure the appointment of Moslems of the class desired by the community. In other words, the committee came to the same conclusions as the All-India Muslim League. The committee suggested two measures:

1. They suggested that in addition to the small number of Moslems who might be able to secure election in the ordinary manner, a certain number of seats should be assigned to be filled exclusively by Moslems.

2. They suggested that a separate Moslem electorate be

¹ The address of the deputation is thoroughly analysed in the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv pp 130-31. They also suggested similar professional class (Moslem) electorates for representation in provincial councils.

² Mary Minto, op cit., pp 46-47 (*Journal*, October 1 1906).

Verncy Lovett, op cit. p 75 "Thus originated the concession to minorities of communal representation."

Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv p 130 "Both the address (of the Muslim League) and Minto's reply and documents are of the highest importance in tracing the history of communal electorates."

Lord Morley spoke approvingly of Minto's speech. Mary Minto, op cit., p 48 (Morley to Minto, October 26, 1906).

Ibid., p 147 (Morley to Minto, June 28 1907).

The delegates also were pleased at the speech of Minto. Mary Minto, op cit., p 47.

formed for the purpose of filling those seats or a portion of them.

These proposals were supported by the Government of India and communicated to the Secretary of State. He accepted the principle that the Moslem community was entitled to a special representation on the Governor-General's and local legislative councils commensurate with its numbers and political and historical importance. This correspondence led to the issue by the Government of India of their letter,¹ addressed to local governments on the subject of the reforms with instructions to consult important bodies and individual representatives of various classes of the community before submitting their own conclusions to the Government of India. With regard to Hindu and Moslem representation they affirmed Minto's reply to the All-India Muslim League and the proposals of the council's committee.² In other words, they suggested the consideration of the idea of communal representation.

The local governments found that associations, important individuals, and the Hindu professional classes as a rule criticized the proposal of separate communal electorates, while the Government of India appeared frankly to recommend the adoption of the principle of class, as opposed to territorial representation.³ An acting sub-collector of Kumbakonam wrote to the collector of Tanjore

"I do not believe that such special representatives are wanted practically . . . the only solution is to have territorial constituencies."⁴

The Maharaj-Kumar Sir Prodyot Cosmar Tagore, Honorary Secretary British Indian Association, wrote to the Secretary of the Government of Bengal.

¹ No 2310-17 dated August 24, 1907 (Cd 3710, 1907)

² Cd 3710, op cit, pp 10-11

³ Letter from J N Atkinson to the Secretary to the Government of India dated Fort St George, March 13, 1908 No 222 Enclosure X in Cd 4435, 1908, p 1

⁴ Dated December 20, 1907, No 1518 G and B in Enclosure XV, p 173 (Cd 4435, 1908)

R H Craddock, op cit, Enclosure XXIV, Cd 4436, 1908, p 3 "I must confess that I fail to see any danger in creating constituencies partly on the basis of territorial distinctions and such elective powers as are given should be free and unhampered by class restrictions"

The committee are opposed to creed legislation. If one religious class be favoured, members of all the prevailing religions in India would clamour for special representation. Already they understand that more than one religious community has put in its claim. We have been told that special preference should be shown to Mohammedans on account of their numbers, and social, political, and historical importance. The committee do not see the value of the so-called importance, and fail to find any reason why they should be singled out for special treatment, or why a separate Mohammedan electorate should be created. ¹

The Madras Landholders' Association also ventured to point out that the principle of the representation of castes and creeds which stands out as one of the prominent features of the proposed scheme, was in its humble opinion open to grave objection in that it was calculated to accentuate differences which are fast losing their importance in secular affairs, and interfere with the growth of a sentiment of unity among the people which was a necessary condition of progress ²

The Hindu professional classes were, as a rule, against this idea of communal representation. The reforms despatch of the Government of India spoke of their criticisms thus

"These proposals are as a rule adversely criticized by the Hindus, who regard them as an attempt to set one religion against the other, and thus to create a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class. The Bombay Presidency Association objects strongly to the creation of a special Mohammedan electorate. ³

The policy of counterpoise was vigorously challenged by the Bombay Presidency Association. It said '*The keynote of the proposals for reform is the creation of a counterpoise to the influence of the educated class*'. This, of course, will be no difficult task. The highest and lowest classes are generally adverse to the thinking and intellectual class. The former oppose it

No 397 dated Calcutta December 10, 1907 in Enclosure XVIII Cd. 4435 1908 p 43

✓ In its letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government dated January 23, 1908, in Enclosure XV Cd. 4435 1908 p 34.

The despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, No 21 dated October 1 1908 (In Mukerji, op cit., p 293)

because its tendencies are hostile to their interests, and the latter because those tendencies are apt to assail their prejudices but the task will be unworthy of enlightened and beneficent statesmanship.”¹

The Gujerat Sabha also respectfully begged the Government to consider whether the contemplated policy would not very likely set up class against class, and so neutralize all the forces of Indian public opinion by causing their mutual destruction ²

The leaders of the Hindu professional classes protested against class electorates. They demanded the formation of territorial constituencies ³ The British Indian Association and the Madras Landholders' Association also protested against class and communal electorates. But the local governments, in spite of universal opposition, echoed their master's voice in approving the proposals for the special representation of Mohammedans ⁴ The Mohammedans, on the other hand, pointed out that the reforms of 1892 paid no regard to the diversity of the interests involved, and that territorial representation, in so far as it was then introduced, had placed a monopoly of voting power in the hands of the Hindu professional class. Most of them expressed their satisfaction with the proposed scheme. They were unanimous in their commendation of the proposals to assign special seats to them ⁵

The Government of India ignored the criticisms of the Hindu professional class and others, and in their despatch to the Secretary of State affirmed their adherence to the theory of communal representation ⁶

Subsequent discussions turned on the nature of the method by which Moslem representation should be secured. The Muslim League in its address to Lord Morley protested against

¹ From the Bombay Presidency Association to the Secretary to the Government, Bombay, dated February 24, 1908, in Enclosure XVII, Cd 4435, 1908, p 102

² Gujerat Sabha Ahmedabad, in its letter to the Governor of Bombay in Council dated December 14, 1907, in Enclosure XVII, Cd 4435, 1908, p 39

³ Government of India Reform Despatch, 1908, op cit, p 273

⁴ Ibid, p. 293

⁵ Ibid, pp. 272-73

⁶ Ibid, pp. 293-94 (para 30)

certain mixed electoral colleges which had been suggested at that time. The Moslems demanded an election of their own representatives to the councils in all the stages. They demanded a number of seats in excess of their numerical strength. Lord Morley was ready and prepared to meet these demands in full.¹ In a debate on this question in the House of Commons, Buchanan stated that Moslem representation would be obtained in the future in different ways in different provinces, in some provinces by a system of Moslem electorates specially constructed, in others, by asking the Moslem associations to name representatives, in others, by nominations.² At a later stage of the debate, Asquith remarked that undoubtedly there would be a separate register for Moslems.³ In opposition to this, in the Imperial Legislative Council of India Dadabhoi took exception to class and communal representation.

The result of all this discussion was the constitution of the provincial legislative councils based upon a system of representation of classes and interests, consisting of basic constituencies representing landholders, groups of district boards, and groups of municipal townships. There were no territorial constituencies properly so-called, but the three presidency corporations returned special representatives, and, except in their case, no individual town or city had its own special member. To these basic classes were added representatives of universities, chambers of commerce, trade associations, and other like interests, the members returned being in the great majority of cases elected, but in some instances nominated. On these constituencies there were superimposed certain special Moslem electorates. Thus, besides voting in their own special constituencies, Moslems also voted in the general electorates to counterpoise that for which these constituencies were created. These special Moslem constituencies were on a territorial basis in the sense only that the province was divided

¹ In his speech on the second reading of the Government of India Bill February 23 1909 in the House of Lords. Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv p 134.

² When the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill was moved in the House of Commons on the 2nd of April 1909 Indian Statutory Commission Report, pp 134-35

³ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv p 135

territorially for the purpose of the election of Moslem representatives¹ This is how the principle of the communal representation came to a statutory existence

Nine years later, the Indian Statutory Commission defended this policy on two grounds.²

1. The creation of a Moslem electorate, when the elective principle was openly recognized, was not a novel departure from a previously accepted policy. The need for Moslem representation was recognized no less in 1892 than in 1909 Lord Kimberley said: "There must be found some mode in India of seeing that minorities such as the important body of Moslems are fully represented"³ These separate electorates confirmed the policy, already accepted, of representation by interests, including communal interests.

In this the Commission was partly right While the idea was in existence the regulations of the Act of 1892 did not specifically recognize communal divisions The Commission did not give reasons why this idea was given a statutory confirmation in 1909 The only pillar of strength to the Moslems prior to 1898 was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan The Moslem professional class was not yet in organized existence It came in 1906 with the All-India Muslim League It was the emergence of this organization that hastened the previous idea into an accepted policy of counterpoise against the Hindu professional classes by a statutory confirmation The commission failed to show this relationship between the recognition of the principle of communal representation and the emergence of the Moslem professional class

2 The Government of India never intended a parliamentary system of government to be established in India As such, the acceptance of communal electorate should be read in the closest possible relation to the nature of the reforms

Here, too, the Commission was right only in its first part of the statement But it failed to show in the latter part how communal representation could be a stepping-stone to parlia-

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol iv, p 136

² Ibid, p 137

³ Parliamentary Debates, fourth series, vol 1 (February 9 to March 3, 1892), p 414

mentary government, and whether representation of interests, classes, and communities on a religious basis was the only practicable method. Further criticism of this defence of communal representation is given below in the analysis of the other reasons.

Reasons which induced Minto to extend the Principle of Communities, Classes, and Interests to Moslems

WHAT are the other reasons which induced the Government of India to accept communal electorates? The verbose official reasons it gave were not true. Neither the Government of India nor the Moslems gave specific instances which proved that the interests of the Moslems were jeopardized by the predominance of the Hindu professional classes, and by the introduction of the elective principle¹ Nor have they shown how, under the existing constitution of the Government of India, the preponderance of the Hindu professional classes could do anything either against the Moslems or the Government. The Gujerat Sabha had pointed out already that such a contention would be untenable² Even if such a contingency were to arise the

¹ S M Mitra, *Anglo Indian Studies*, pp 312-13 Mitra cited the instance of Hyderabad, where the elective system in the Legislative Council did not work against the Moslems Both Morley and the Muslim League ignored this point See *ibid*, pp 313-16

Page 317 "The system of election of Mahomedans suggested by the All India League savours of Divide and Rule"

Ibid, p 308 "No amount of wire pulling could convince a thoughtful Mahomedan that the interests of a Mahomedan prince or a Mahomedan peasant differ from those of a Hindu prince or a Hindu peasant Whatever rights the natives of India have under the British Government, the Mahomedans and Hindus enjoy equally In the same way the limitations of the natives of India are shared equally by Hindu and Mahomedan"

Ibid, pp 308-9 "Both Mahomedans and Hindus have sat in the legislative councils (newly constituted after 1892) If the interests of the Mahomedans are so much opposed to the interests of the Hindus, surely instances might be found in the records of the deliberations of the various councils in India It would have been better for the All India Moslem League to quote chapter and verse from the proceedings of the Indian legislative councils to prove their case than to indulge in vague surmises. The Moslem agitators have yet to prove how the interests of the Mahomedan peasant differ from those of the Hindu cultivator"

² "To speak of the educated classes having hitherto had a 'virtual monopoly of the power exercised by the Councils' is manifestly untenable Such a monopoly of power in the legislative councils has always remained

Government possessed ample powers to veto any legislation repugnant to the interests of the Moslems or the Government. The Government officially announced that its object in the reform scheme was to "give to the people of India wider opportunities of expressing their views on administrative matters"¹ Their functions, the reforms circular stated, were purely advisory. How, then, could the representatives of the Hindu professional classes work against the interests of the Moslems and the Government with such purely advisory functions? The Government of India was fully aware of the powers possessed by the Indian councils. While offsetting one class against another, who were satisfied with their equivocal right of expression in the councils, listening to their forensic eloquence the Government laughed at their views and votes. The Government knew full well that these political marionettes could not harm its interests, nor those of the Moslems. They masked their real motives behind the official phraseology "of bringing all classes of people into closer relations with the Government and its officers," and "of increasing the opportunities of the people of India by making known their feelings and wishes in respect of administrative and legislative questions."² The real reasons are not hard to be found.

1 The first was the fear that the younger generation of the Moslems would ally themselves with the cause of the Congress. ✓ Minto referred to this in his reply to the address of the Muslim League.³ Morley was warned of this by men like Lawrence, with government officials who invariably possess a standing majority there. The Sabha is not aware of a single instance of elected representatives having ever scored a victory against the solid phalanx of official members. In the matter of such bills, for instance, as the Official Secrets Bill, 'The Universities Act Amendment Bill' and the recent Seditious Public Meetings Bill before the Supreme Council, and the Bombay Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill of 1901 before the Bombay Provincial Council Government could carry their bills through by the aid of a compact official majority in the teeth of the earnest and unanimous opposition of the elected representatives of the people." Cd. 4435 1908, op cit. Enclosure XVII pp 38-39

¹ Circular dated August 24, 1907 Cd. 3710, 1907 p 3

Circular op cit. p 4.

³ Mary Minto, op cit., p 46 (*Journal*, October 1 1906): 'You cannot but be aware that recent events have stirred up feelings amongst the younger generation of Mahomedans which might "pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance"'

Mary Minto, op cit., p 45 "The younger generation were wavering,

Chirol, and Sidney Low¹ On the very evening of his address to the Muslim League, Minto received a letter from an official. "I must send your Excellency a line to say that a very very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people (Moslems) from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition" (Congress)² Lady Minto wrote that very much the same view was taken at Whitehall.³

2. The Government was aware of the warnings of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He impressed upon the Government that if the agitation spread from the unwarlike (Hindu) to the warlike (Moslem) classes, it would go beyond writing and talking, and would lead to bloodshed. If the Moslems joined in the schemes of the Congress, he warned that the Viceroy would realize that "a Mohammedan agitation was not the same as a Bengali agitation"⁴ The Government did not forget 1857, nor the need to conciliate the Moslems. In conciliating the Moslem professional class it also used it as a counterpoise against the Hindu professional class. This is the second real reason for the official recognition of communal representation.)

3. The third was the phenomenal growth of the All-India Muslim League. After its address to Minto it came gradually into widespread existence. Meetings were held at Dacca in 1906 at the invitation of Nawab Salim Ullah Khan, and at Karachi in 1907 under Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy. Resolutions were passed relating to adequate Moslem representation in the new councils, to the Moslem places in the public service, and to

inclined to throw in their lot with the advanced agitators of the Congress, and a howl went up that the loyal Mahomedans were not to be supported, and that the agitators were to obtain their demands through agitation. The Mahomedans decided before taking their action that they would bring an address before the Viceroy, mentioning their grievances" (*Journal*)

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 30 (Morley to Minto, June 6, 1906) "Everybody warns us that a new spirit is growing and spreading over India. Lawrence, Chirol, Sidney Low all sing the same song. 'You cannot go on governing in the same spirit, you have got to deal with the Congress Party and Congress principles whatever you may think of them. Be sure that before long the Mahomedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you,' and so on and so forth."

² Mary Minto, op cit, pp 47-48

³ Ibid, p 48

⁴ Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *On the Present State of Indian Politics*, p 18

Moslem loyalty In March 1908 a meeting was held at Aligarh under the presidency of the Aga Khan. A branch had been started in London under the Honourable Amir Ali. A deputation of this branch waited upon Lord Morley to represent to him the views of the Moslems of India on the projected Indian reforms.¹ In India the Aga Khan was popularizing the ideas of the League. The Government of India took into account this growing strength of the Moslem professional classes.² In recognizing the claims of the Moslems the Government of India not only rallied moderate Moslem opinion, but set this class as a counterpoise against the Hindu professional class.

(The real reasons that induced Minto to accept the theory of communal representation were the warning of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the fear that the younger generation of the Moslems might join the Congress movement, and the growing strength of the Muslim League.

¹ On January 27 1909 see Lord Morley's reply to his deputation. Lord Morley *Indian Speeches* (Naresan, second edition), pp. 206 ff.

² Mary Minto, op. cit., p. 165 (Minto to Morley November 23 1907) "During the last three weeks I have received 59 telegrams from Mahomedan societies in Upper India communicating resolutions passed at meetings to discuss the proposed council reforms, and the majority beg that the grateful thanks of the senders be communicated to the Secretary of State for the appointment of Mr Bilgrami Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk to the India Office Council."

Role of Gokale in the Extension of the Principle to Moslems

WHAT role did Gokhale play in the formulation of the principle of communal representation? Lady Minto believed that separate electorates were proposed by Gokhale¹ Srinivasa Sastri, the successor of Gokhale, does not deny that Gokhale stood up in support of separate electorates in the Legislative Council and elsewhere² Gokhale took the same line as Lord Morley. To him it was an evil from which there was no escape. In a speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on March 29, 1909, he said that his views on the subject of Moslem representation were practically the same as those of the Government of India³ He recognized at the same time the evils of such a system On January 24, 1911, he said that the Hindus should make the best of the situation, and that the Government could not take away from the Moslems what they had given them yesterday⁴ One does not expect Gokhale, a trained official and a moderate, to disagree with the Government. However, Gokhale cannot be absolved from the responsibility of this major contradiction of Indian politics—communal electorates

Of all the men, Lord Morley alone could have saved the situation He was, at first, against separate electorates and for

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 20 (*Journal* of October 1932) "You forget, Mr Gandhi," I (Lady Minto) replied, "that the separate electorates were proposed by your leader and predecessor, Mr Gokhale" "Ah," said Mr Gandhi, with a smile, "Gokhale was a good man, but even good men may make mistakes" Apparently Gandhi agreed with Lady Minto that Gokhale proposed separate electorates

² Indian Round Table Conference Proceedings of Sub-Committees, Part II, Sub-Committee No III, 1931 (70-249-2), p 125

³ Indian Statutory Commission, vol IV, p 135 His speech on this point is quoted there

⁴ Shahani, Gokhale, p 353

territorial representation.¹ Doctrinaire liberal as he was, he saw everything through liberalism, but his liberalism was rigid.² He hesitated. He boasted "I have sat for five and twenty years in the House of Commons."³ Yet he had very little administrative experience. The atmosphere of the House of Commons warped his judgments. His 'policy of caution' was a legend. Anything that was not in the orthodox book of liberalism he did not understand. Hence he was indecisive. He depended on the Viceroy a great deal. His policy of caution was nothing but a policy of his indecisiveness when his liberalism failed to give him a ready-made solution. He wrote to Minto 'If I may seem over-cautious to you, it is only because I do not know the Indian ground, and I hate to drive quick in the dark.'⁴ Morley did not keep to this. He wavered while Minto drove home the need for separate electorates. He drove quick in the dark. He at last yielded, literally coerced by the Moslems and the Viceroy.⁵ In connection with deportations, although he yielded at first to Minto, he later reasserted himself. He demanded the release of the deportees and won his case. There was another reason that induced Morley to yield to Moslem demands. John Buchan in his *Minto* wrote "Indeed he (Morley) had a strong distaste for all coloured races, and little imaginative insight into their moods and views. *The real truth,*' he told Lady Minto in a revealing letter, *is that I am an occidental, not an oriental don't betray this fatal secret or I shall be ruined*

¹ Morley wrote to Minto December 6, 1909 "I won't follow you again into our Mahometan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was your early speech about their extra claims that first started the M (Moslem) hare." Morley's *Recollections* vol ii p 325

² John Buchan, *Minto*, p 223 "His intellectual allegiance was owed to a school of thought which tended always towards rigidity in theory and rigidity in theory is apt, if the thinker becomes a statesman, to develop into absolutism in practice."

³ Mary Minto op cit. p 240 (Morley to Minto, June 17 1908)

⁴ Mary Minto, op cit. p 145 (Morley to Minto June 21 1907)

⁵ Sastri "I myself had the honour one day of listening to Morley upon this subject when I complained that in the electoral system of India he was responsible for a vicious element. He told me emphatically that he resisted their introduction for a very long time, and it was not until he was convinced that he could confer no reforms whatever upon India of a political character unless he guaranteed separate electorates that he went and adopted them. Proceedings of the Indian Round Table Conference Sub-Committees, Part II 1931 op cit., p 125

I think I like Mohammedans, but I cannot go further than that in an easterly direction'"¹ If Morley had remained firm in his original ideas, and if he had reasserted himself as he did in the case of deportations, and if he had not a little liking for Moslems, would India have had communal electorates? Yes. Are these psychological factors accidental? No. The political policy of imperialism would have led to them. His emphatic reply to Sastri on the justification of the principle of communal representation when he had finally made up his mind, clearly shows that Morley bears full responsibility for the introduction into Indian politics of what Sastri calls "the vicious element." It is a pity that Morley, who refuted so much of Durham's theory of men on the spot, in his correspondence with Minto and Sydenham, should be a victim to Minto's suggestions, and later defend them with the zeal of a new convert. Morley was never firm in any of his Indian ideas. He had no convictions of his own. He listened to everyone. He approved "the whole armoury of Irish coercion" in India—"deportation and imprisonment without trial, suppression of meetings, police reports, power of district judges or resident magistrates" Austen Chamberlain wrote. "Is it not the irony of fate that it should fall to his lot to do all this? I think he is rather proud of his strength in a rather weak man's way."² "He was not at all inclined to let natives enter the high places of the service—in particular, not disposed to admit them to his Council or to Minto's . . . He asked my view as to a native member of his Council—a representative, as Bigge called it, of Indian opinion. I said I was dead against it, first, because a native was no more a representative of India than the Archbishop of Canterbury was of the Baptists or the Unitarians, second, because our whole position in India rested on the admission that we were different from and in a different position from the natives. We could not admit equality. White men could not, and ought not to, submit to coloured rule. . . . Morley said he pretty much agreed with my conclusions, though not with all my reasons. *He knew he would not submit*

¹ John Buchan, *Minto*, pp. 222-23

² Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside—an Epistolary Chronicle, 1906-1914*, Cassell, London, 1936, p. 87 (May 14, 1907)

to be governed by a man of colour. Then he spoke of a Labour M.P., who had asked him when he was going to govern India according to Indian ideas. 'Indian ideas! What are they? Caste (not exactly the labour ideal!), purdah, suttee, child marriages, female infanticide—those are Indian ideas. Govern India according to Indian ideas—what nonsense.'¹ Such was Morley, weak and vacillating, dissembling, contradictory, undependable,² and not above vulgar prejudices. He governed India according to the ideas of British imperialism, not by his own initiative, which he lacked, but by that of others.

¹ Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside* pp 59-60 (March 15 1907)

² Ibid. p 336 "The trouble about our dear John," commented Balfour "is that you can't trust him. He talks to you like this in private and then lets you down in public" (May 1 1911) On Indian affairs he talked like a chauvinist in private and like a statesman in public.

Critique of the Principle of Representation of Communities, Classes, and Interests

WE now see that Minto's special contribution lies in the extension of the principle of representation of classes, interests, and communities to a wider base. He desired to rally to the Government the moderate group which had been antagonized by Curzon. He desired to bring forward into political life the large landowners, the industrial and commercial classes, and Moslems. To do this, he followed the previously accepted principle of "communities, classes, and interests." As Minto's despatch itself asserts, and as we have already noted cursorily, this principle was not a new one. What is this principle? Let us follow the ancestry of this idea in detail before we analyse it. In 1888, Lord Macdonnell said "The process of modifying the existing constitution of the councils should proceed on a clear recognition and firm grasp of the fact that India is a congeries of races, nationalities, and creeds, widely differing *inter se* in 'variety of ways' "¹ On the same occasion Sir Charles Chesney expressed similar views. Sir Charles Aitchison observed that "the division of the people into creeds and castes and sects with varying and conflicting interests" rendered representation in the European sense an obvious impossibility. A passage in Lord Dufferin's minute annexed to the Government of India's despatch of November 6, 1888, describes the population of India as "composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, while many of them are still further separated from one another by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages, and even antagonistic

¹ Lord Macdonnell, then Home Secretary to Lord Dufferin's Government, in the course of discussions leading up to the report of Sir Charles Chesney's committee said in a note which was forwarded to the India Office Government of India Reform Despatch 1908, op cit, p 283 (Mukherji)

material interests." The debates in Parliament on the Indian Councils Bill of 1892 reflected the same views.¹ To the principle thus affirmed by the Parliament, Lord Lansdowne's Government endeavoured to give wide scope in the regulations framed by them for the constitution of the provincial legislative councils. In the letters addressed by them to local governments on August 15, 1892, they enumerated the interests which seemed to them to be of sufficient importance to require representation, and indicated the manner in which the seats to be filled by recommendation should be allotted so as to secure their object in view.² According to Lansdowne's classification, the classes which were of sufficient importance to require representation were 1, Hindus, 2, Moslems, 3, Non-official European and Anglo-Indians, 4, merchants, traders, and manufacturers, 5, the planting community, 6, the population of the presidency town, 7, the urban classes of the Muffassil, 8, the rural classes, and 9, the professional and literary classes. Minto followed the same principle as a guidance for his concessions, but he adopted a different classification.³ According to his classification, based on the census of 1901, the communities comprised Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, and Jains. The interests comprised agriculture, commerce and industry, professions. In his proposal for representation he included landholders, Moslems, Chambers of Commerce, and representatives of Indian commerce. It is on the basis of this classification that Minto arrived at the conclusion that representation by classes and interests was the only practicable method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the councils,⁴ and that territorial representation was unsuitable to India. This is the principle that Minto followed.

This principle has four defects. The first defect is that it represents a classification full of cross divisions, ignoring the real communities and classes.

¹ The speeches of Ripon, Kimberley, Northbrook, Gladstone, Smith, Plowden, Temple—all echoed the same idea. Summarized in Government of India Despatch, op cit. para. 19 pp 284-85 (Mukherji)

² See Indian Statutory Commission, vol iv p 128

³ Government of India Reform Despatch 1908, op cit. p 286 (Mukherji)

⁴ Government of India Reform Despatch 1908, op cit. p 283.

What is the principle of the classification that Minto adopted? Is it valid? According to his classification, Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, and Jains are regarded as communities. This classification is one according to religion alone, and not according to entire life. Religion is not the entire factor that determines a community. Language, culture, historical associations, and contiguous area are other factors. The Government of India did not formulate this principle of community correctly. They stated it vaguely. They did not clearly see the difference in the meaning of terms like race, nationality, creed, sect, and caste. They used the terms interchangeably. They confused the word "community" sometimes with class as Lansdowne did, sometimes with sect as Minto did, and sometimes with "race." They understood it in its religious sense, but not in its historical associations. They failed to note that communities are made up of several ethnic groups, castes, creeds, and classes. Lord Dufferin was the one who came nearest to grasping the problem of nationalities in India.¹ But this hint was not followed up by succeeding Viceroy. For instance, Lord Lansdowne, to mark out . . . "the classes which were of sufficient importance to require representation" cited out among others Hindus and Moslems.² Here the noble lord confounded classes with religious adherents. He no doubt saw that the classification he adopted was a cross division. A person belonging to the professional or urban class might be a Hindu or a Moslem. A person belonging to the rural class might also be a Moslem or a Hindu.³ Hindus are of several nationalities and classes. Moslems are also of various geographical areas and classes, sometimes they are

¹ Dufferin, *Speeches* (speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, Calcutta, November 30, 1888), p. 233. "Well then, gentlemen, what is India? It is an empire equal in size, if Russia be excluded, to the entire continent of Europe, with a population of 250 million souls. This population is composed of a large number of distinct nationalities—the census report says that there are 106 different Indian tongues—not dialects mind you—of which 18 are spoken by more than a million persons."

Compare Dufferin's view with that of Sir Thomas Munro. He believed that the whole of India was not one nation (J. Bradshaw, *Sir Thomas Munro*, Oxford, 1894, p. 85). Yet he believed that " . . . there are no distinct nations in India like French, Spaniards, Germans and Italians."

² Ibid., p. 80.

³ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. IV, p. 128.

³ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. IV, p. 129.

synonymous with a nationality like the Sindhia. In a Sikh religion and nationality blend. This last exception would not improve the classifications of either Lansdowne or Minto. Lord Macdonnell committed the same error of cross division.

It is very curious to note that the Government of India adopts a correct criterion for determining what a "nation" is, when it insists on the idea that India is not a homogeneous community, a nation. But it does not apply the same criterion to determine what a community or a nation is, when it comes to the question of representation. It always adopts religion as the basis for determining a community. The conclusion which the Government of India arrived at, namely, that India is not a nation, is too true, but the Government of India did not carry this conclusion to its logical historical and practical limits. "India is a land of several nationalities or communities. Each community is made up of several races. Each has historical associations. Each has classes and their interests." The Government of India did not follow this conclusion. If it did, it should have sought out the nationalities submerged in artificial boundaries. It should have appointed a nationality commission to study the problem, and a boundary commission for the redistribution of the existing provinces on nationality lines. It should not have identified nationality with religious adherents, and relied on vague census reports. All these questions simply never existed for the Government of India. These are not the problems for imperialism.

The phrase "communities, classes, and interests" as interpreted by the Government of India is redundant. In every community there exist classes, sometimes conscious, sometimes not conscious of their identity. Classes exist because of their interests, determined by their relationships in a scheme of society in which they live. Interests are not apart from classes and individuals. It is true that the same classes and individuals have different interests. This is not the distinction that the Government has in mind. The Government of India means by "interests" those that have been organized into associations such as the Chambers of Commerce, and others.¹ The word "interest" in the sense that the Government uses it, apart

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. IV p. 129

from class, is therefore redundant. The classes, commercial and industrial, organize themselves into associations for the defence of their interests. The landed classes organize themselves into landholders' associations for the same reason. If different classes organize themselves into different associations for the defence of their interests, then what need is there for such a cross-division as "classes" and "interests"? The Government of India should have chosen one or the other. By such cross-division the Government secured double representation of these commercial, industrial, and landholding classes as a solid phalanx against the Congress group. At this stage the alliance between the commercial and the industrialist classes and the professional classes is yet in the making. The object of such a cross-division is the same as creating separate electorates for the Moslems, and at the same time allowing them to participate in a general electorate. This is to secure double representation of Moslems as a solid block against the Hindu professional classes.

If our interpretation of "communities, classes, and interests" is correct, by representation of "communities" we mean that of real historical communities and not particular religious adherents with their several classes and interests. This is not what the Government meant. Evading a scientific enquiry, they gave a political meaning to the phrase "representation of communities, classes, and interests" which is advantageous for the maintenance of their own interests.

Why did the Government of India give such a political interpretation to the principle of "communities, classes, and interests"? The answer is, for precisely the same reasons that induced Minto to recognize communal electorates. In other words, the policy of counterpoise demands such an interpretation of "communities." Hence it cannot be accidental. The Government has knowledge of the communities in the sense we interpret. For instance.

1. Lords Lansdowne, Macdonnell, and Dufferin spoke of nationalities, although the first two vitiated their classification by cross-divisions.

2. The Government, including individual writers, have a correct notion of what a community or nation is when they assert that India is not a nation.

3 The Government was quite familiar with the correct and scientific meaning of the word 'community' in connection with the Oriya movement in the suggestions of Sir Stafford Northcote¹ in 1868 and Sir Andrew Fraser in 1901. On the part of the Oriyas, the movement for separate recognition of their nationality dates as far back as 1845. The papers relating to the reconstruction of Bengal and Assam² contain significant ideas regarding historical communities. The partition of Bengal raised the question of nationalities in no small measure. The despatches of Risley and Hardinge also contain suggestions regarding historical communities. Furthermore, this question presented itself also, somewhat remotely, in discussions on 'devolution,' "decentralization," and "provincial autonomy." By the time that Minto came to India, the movement for redistribution of provinces on nationality lines was already in existence, confined to the professional classes.

4. Lastly, on the question of classes, the Government of India on one occasion at least adopted a correct classification.³

¹ *Calcutta Gazette Supplement* dated October 23 p. 2357.

² Cd. 2658 1905.

³ For the analysis of class forces by the Government during the years 1909-1928 and 1930, see memorandum on some of the results of Indian administration during the past thirty years of British rule in India—India Office, October 1909, Cd. 4956, p. 26. Here, while describing the condition of different classes, the population was divided into (1) the landowning class, (2) the trading class, (3) the professional class, (4) the tenant or ryot class, (5) and the labouring class. No cross-division was employed in this classification.

See also Report of the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee, 1928 vol. I pp. 358-59. The committee classifies the classes into four main ones with several subdivisions. This classification is very instructive—I. *Daily Labourers* (1) the urban labourers, including the lower grades of urban artisans; (2) the landless agricultural labourers and the lower grades of village artisans. II. *Agriculturists* (1) the small holder whether ryot or tenant (2) the peasant proprietor with a substantial holding, generally in the temporarily settled areas; (3) the large landholder generally in the Zamindari areas. III. *Trading Community* (1) the petty trader in the village and in the town; (2) the large trader generally in the town, who is subject to income tax; (3) the big merchant class. IV. *Professional Class* (1) the clerical class including the subordinate ranks of Government servants and the lower ranges of professional men, who are not subject to the income tax (2) the upper professional classes.

See Government of India's despatch on proposals for constitutional reform, dated September 20, 1930, Cmd. 3700, p. 3. "They consist of the professional classes, in particular lawyers, journalists and those connected with

But it did not pursue the same line in connection with the discussion regarding communal representation.

From these instances it cannot be argued that the Government has no conception of "communities and classes" in the objective sense. Why then does the Government prefer a political interpretation to an objective one? Minto would answer this well. In his reply to the Muslim League's address, Minto agreed with the claim that the position of the Moslems should be judged not merely on numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of the community and the service it had rendered to the Empire¹ Here Minto meant by a community certain religious adherents, that is, the Moslems. What constitutes "political importance" in the eyes of the British can be distilled from the writings of Elgin, Lytton, and Minto. It is measured by the extent to which people show loyalty and service to the Empire. It is also measured to the extent to which certain religious adherents,

education, an appreciable portion of the trading classes, those engaged in clerical occupations, the large number of students at the universities and colleges, the melancholy army of those who having sacrificed much to go through the scholastic curriculum find at the end that their country offers them no employment, and lastly the small but growing body of educated women. These are perhaps the chief elements that go to make up what we may call the political classes."

Pages 3-4 "But it can hardly be denied that the trading classes have been taking more and more active part in politics."

Page 4 "After all allowance is made for the religious and emotional appeal of Mr. Gandhi's name for his own countrymen, the Gujaratis, who form such a large element in the life of Bombay City, it must be recognized that the commercial community has in pursuit of political power been lending its support, both moral and material, to a movement in defiance of law which might have been expected to have no attraction for those whose interests depend on stable and peaceful conditions."

Page 4 "passing to the more conservative elements in the population, the most important class is that of the larger landholders. Below them in the agricultural world come the small landholders and the more substantial peasantry. In the Punjab where the small landholders are a strong and increasing force there are signs of the development of a conflict of interests between them and the town dwellers." Below this stratum come what may be called the agricultural masses.

Page 5 "The towns, too, have their counterpart to agricultural masses, that is, the industrial labour. The general effect of the picture is that the classes affected by political opinion form a wide circle which is steadily expanding."

¹ Mary Minto, op cit, p 47

belonging to a certain particular class, can be used as a counterpoise against the same class of a different faith. It is from this angle that the political importance of "religious adherents," calling them a community, is judged. The political importance of the Moslems came into prominence only with the advent of the Moslem professional class and the need to counterpoise the predominance of the Hindu professional class. In other words, the Government of India classified certain religious adherents, calling them communities, and their relative importance according to political expediency. Such a subjective political interpretation of the principle of "communities," classes, and interests is a necessary part of the policy of counterpoise.

If the principle of communities with their classes and interests were correctly grasped, the classifications of communities would not run on religious or on purely ethnic lines, but on lines of historical associations, on lines of lasting identity of language, territory, economic life, and psychology manifesting itself in identity of culture.¹ "It is customary," wrote Stalin, "to speak of 'India' as a homogeneous whole. Yet, when the revolution breaks out in Hindostan many hitherto ignored nationalities will emerge from their seclusion, will come forward, each with its own language and its own distinctive racial culture."² A classification on the basis of the definition given before will disclose several historical communities. This is not the proper place to enumerate in detail the historical lasting communities that are at present submerged under artificial provincial boundaries and Indian States.³ For purposes of classification I am enumerating the most important of the historical communities. This question has to be studied by an expert Nationality Commission. These communities are of several stages of development. Some represent a complete stage of development. Some are in the making like the Moslems in the north. Most of them are in a mixed stage of development, feudal and capitalist. These real historical communities should not be confused with "tribes," which are "ethnographical

¹ Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. For the definition of historical community see p. 8.

² Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*, vol. I, p. 272. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

³ This will be discussed thoroughly in my forthcoming book, *The National Question in India*.

categories." The following enumeration does not go by this classification. Historical communities and tribes are mentioned at random as found in particular regions.¹

In the south of India there are four distinct lasting historical communities, the Andhras, the Tamils, the Malayales, and the Kanarese. There are also small tribes such as the Tulus and the Todas. In the west there are three distinct historical communities, namely, the Gujeratis, the Sindhis, and the Maharattas. In the centre there are smaller minor tribes, such as the Bhils and the Santals, and also a larger historical community, the Rajaputs. In the east there are the Oriyans, the Bengalis, the Assamese. It is said that the north of India presents difficulties in the classification of communities. Such a thought is entertained because of the present artificial boundaries. The Sikhs are a distinct nationality, what Risley calls "national castes," with their contiguous territory in central Punjab.² The Kashmiris, the Punjabis, and the Biharis are distinct historical communities. We must not forget the tribe Oaron. All these are questions for further study. If India were to be divided according to this scheme of communities there would still be national minorities.

How would the Moslems, the Anglo-Indians, and the Untouchables be classified? At present the Moslems in India are largely centred in Punjab, N W F Province, Sind, and Bengal. In Bengal the Moslems are in the majority, particularly in the north-eastern part. A Bengali Moslem is different from a Punjabi Moslem. Association of territory and participation in national psychology altered a Moslem in Bengal. He also speaks Bengali. For this reason, although in a majority, the Moslems in Bengal are not regarded as a lasting historical community, but as Bengalis belonging to Moslem faith along

¹ See *The Principal Nations of India* compiled from Hunter, Dalton, Caldwell, Cust, Latham and others, The Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1892. The anonymous writer lists Jains, Marwaris and various tribes as nations.

² Compare the following contradictory view. Sir Patrick Fagan, "The Sikhs" in *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 124. "The Sikhs are neither a race, nor a nationality, nor a caste, but principally the followers of a religion. They form a community which is of importance by reason of traditional prestige derived from its religious and political history rather than from its numbers."

with other Bengalis belonging to Hindu faith. In Sind, a Moslem is a Sindhi. Only in the north would he be in the majority. In the other parts of India he would be classified as a minority. The Moslems, excepting Sindhis, are not regarded as historical communities. They have no one common language. They speak Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu according to the prevailing language of the place in which they reside. They have no contiguous territory except in the north of India. Where they are in the majority, like in the North West Frontier Province, they are so regarded as a community in our sense because of their association with that particular territory for some time past, and because of their cultural and linguistic traditions, which they brought with them, but modified and evolved into a new one by association with the territory. If a Moslem State were to be carved out in the north, the colonist Sikhs and the others would be in a minority.

It is customary among our reactionaries and communalists to speak of Hindu and Moslem nations. The Maha Sabha speaks of Hindu nation. Sir Syed Ahmed taught the Moslem communalists to speak of Moslem nation. Lord Morley on one occasion said: "Only let us not forget that the difference between Mahomedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community."¹ This is a caricature of history. Are not Hindus and Moslems common participants and sufferers in the same political social economic regime? Have they not the same tradition and history since Plassey? If there is any thing common to them left it is their religion, their common origin, and certain relics of previous national character. Even this common religion is modified by a variety of sects and participation in social, political, and economic life of the area in which they at present reside. The Zionists regard the Jews as a nation. All these represent certain religious adherents belonging to different nations. Religion does not make a nation. Hindu or Moslem nationalism is another name for communalism. Hindus and Moslems are not nations.

¹ Quoted in Syed Sirdar Ali Khan, *The Life of Lord Morley* London 1923 p 250.

or lasting historical communities in the sense that they are not readily determined by an area necessary for common life¹

Anglo-Indians also are not regarded as historical communities. Wherever they live they are regarded as a minority. At present, in no part of India are they in the majority. At least, the Moslems are in a majority in some parts of India. An Anglo-Indian has no community of area. The various areas proposed by the Anglo-Indians for colonization purposes cannot be regarded as significant. Most of them are failures. The McCluskie-gunge is no exception. They share the same fate as "the home" for Jews in Palestine.² Under imperialism they will be used for further territorial and communal counterpoises. Under the leadership of communalists they are used for bargaining purposes. Only under conditions of socialism can the free association of people with a particular territory be possible, the colonization of Biro-Bidjan by the Jews in the Soviet Union provides such conditions. The Anglo-Indian at present speaks English. He is now beginning to identify himself with the part of the country he is in. He has learnt, and is learning, the language of the community in which he lives.

The Untouchables are also not regarded as historical communities. They have no one single community of area, or language. They belong to several communities, areas, and languages. If they suffer religious and political disabilities it is because of upper-class dominance. Since they are members of some community or other, they are not regarded as a minority, unless the community to which they belong happens to be in a minority.

For the same reasons the non-Brahmins are not regarded as communities. We will discuss this further when we

¹ R. M. MacIver, *Community*, Macmillan, 1924, third edition, pp. 22-23. "By a community I mean any idea of common life. To deserve the name of community the area must somehow be distinguished from further areas."

R. M. MacIver, *Society*, Macmillan, 1931, p. 59. "In our definition of community we insisted on its distinctively territorial character."

² See *The Colonization Observer*, a magazine founded June 1932, which gives particulars concerning these movements. These enthusiasts of Gidney's kidney already speak of a national home for the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European in India. See *Colonization Observer*, March-April 1938, pp. 1-5.

come to the next milestone in the history of communal representation.

But the historical communities which we cited before are lasting communities with a definite area, history, culture, and language of their own. The Government of India did not follow these objective communities in their interpretation of the principle of "communities, classes, and interests." Instead they followed a classification according to political expediency, full of cross-divisions. This is the first defect of this principle.

The second defect of this principle is this. In its circular to the local governments, on the enlargement of the councils, the Government of India arrived at the conclusion that the representation of landed and monied classes would supply the requisite counterpoise to the excessive influence of lawyers and schoolmasters.¹ They thought that the ruling chiefs, the landholding and commercial classes, representing the most powerful stable elements of Indian society, had become qualified to take a more prominent part in public life and to render a large measure of assistance to the executive government. They thought that the representation of Moslems, as a community, would supply additional counterpoise to the other classes. They thought that the needs and sentiments of the masses would find expression through these people.²

These contentions were questioned by the Hindu professional classes. It was contended that many of the lawyers were themselves landed proprietors.³ The Gujerat Sabha respectfully asked the Government to consider whether this policy of creating a counterpoise would call into existence a better class of representatives, more independent, more informed,

¹ Circular dated Simla August 24 1907 Cd. 3710 1907 p 7 The Minto-Morley councils did not prevent the return of a large number of lawyers. See Montagu-Chelmsford Report para. 84 p 71

² Circular op cit., p 3

³ R. Fischer to the Collector of Madura, December 19 1907 Enclosure XV In Cd. 4435 1908, p 107 "Having no special interest to represent as a class, they are in fact representing the various material interests of the other classes of the community such as landholders, merchants by whom they are elected on account of their superior capacity for discharging the high functions attached to the office of the legislator."

The Bombay Presidency Association held the same view that a great number of lawyers themselves were landholders. Enclosure XVII Cd 4435 1908, p 100.

more patriotic than the present class of lawyers and schoolmasters¹ The Presidency Association could not admit that the needs and sentiments of the masses would find expression through the ruling chiefs or the territorial magnates or the merchant princes or the leaders of industry, whose interests were dissimilar if not adverse, and who were neither acquainted with their daily life, nor qualified to speak with authority. Such needs and sentiments, the association asserted, would find expression only through the educated class² It further pointed out that the landed aristocracy and the mercantile and industrial classes had not the requisite capacity to express their views on matters of legislation and practical administration by their own mouths.³

¹ Letter to Sir George Sydenham Clarke, December 14, 1907, in Enclosure XVII, Cd 4435, 1908, p 39

² The Bombay Presidency Association in its letter to the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, February 24, 1908, Enclosure XVII, p 91 (Cd 4435, 1908)

Its claim that the educated class had sprung from the masses, acquainted with the life in the village and in the smaller town and had mixed freely with the agricultural, commercial and industrial people, is preposterous Ibid , pp 91-92

R N Mudholkar, op cit , Enclosure XXIV, Cd 4436, 1908, p 9 "In India, as elsewhere, the middle class represents the vitality, strength and progressive power of the country "

The Mahajana Sabha, Madras, also took the same view that they were familiar and better acquainted with the needs and sentiments of the masses Letter dated February 25, 1908, Enclosure XXV, Cd 4436, 1908, pp 1-2

The Indian National Congress from its very inception took the same attitude

³ The Bombay Presidency Association, op cit , p 92 R N Mudholkar (another representative of the Hindu professional class) wrote in a note of January 20, 1908, Enclosure XXIV, Cd 4436, 1908, p 8) "The majority of the ruling princes can hardly be regarded as the equal in ability or experience of those whom British Indian Government have been in the habit of consulting in regard to important legislative and administrative questions "

Ibid , p 9 "The territorial magnates do not represent the best mind of the people, though education has penetrated among them to a greater extent than twenty years ago, they have not as a class shown any noticeable talents, industry or culture "

The Mahajana Sabha, Madras, wrote (Enclosure XXV, Cd 4436, 1908, p 1) "They (the ruling chiefs and the territorial magnates) have always been accustomed to a life of comparative seclusion They have scarcely been known, as a class, to identify themselves with any cause affecting the welfare of large sections of the people or to inaugurate measures for ameliorating their condition "

Mr MacNeill, speaking on the second reading of the Indian Councils Act, 1892, remarked "A Maharajah of the North-West Provinces was appointed a member of the Supreme Council, and he could not speak a word of English, and was not allowed to have an interpreter. After the meeting a relative asked him how he got on. The reply was 'At first I found it difficult, but, then, there was the Governor-General who elected me, and when he raised his hand I raised mine, and when he put his hand down I put mine.'" Are these the men who give a fair and independent opinion of the feelings and sentiments of the masses?¹

The Gujerat Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association, and the Madras Mahajana Sabha represented the Hindu professional classes. As such they defended the interests of their class. Their claim to representing the masses was as absurd as the claim of the Government that the landed aristocracy, the monied and industrial classes represent the masses. Their claims that these classes—landed, monied, and industrial classes—were not qualified to express their views are too true. The upper classes had not the incentive to take to education, as the middle classes, as a means of livelihood. Consequently the middle classes had a better start in education than the upper and industrialist classes.² Of these classes it was the lawyers alone who were able to express their views on important

¹ Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, four series, vol. iii, pp. 94-95

² R. H. Craddock, "Note on the Government of India's proposals regarding legislative and advisory councils" (June 8, 1908. Enclosure XXIV. Cd. 4436, 1908, p. 2) "Education began to supplant birth as the basis of authority. The great landed nobility their powers held in check by British law. Instead of rising in the scale ahead of the middle class, lagged behind, while the literate section of the middle classes, at first seizing upon education as a means of earning a livelihood for which they had formerly depended solely upon patronage, began to be infused with democratic ideas. The result has been that the Indian literate classes have jumped a whole grade in the process of evolution over the heads of the upper classes who had not the incentive to seek education as a means of livelihood and have only just begun, to a limited extent, to seek it for its own sake.

"The problem with which the government is now confronted is how to reconcile the growing claims of the educated minority with the backward condition of the upper classes in any scheme of enlarged consultation with the people that it desires to introduce. Can it now stave the purely educational evolution which it has started by an attempt artificially to restore the aristocracy to the position in the scale which they should occupy but which

matters of administration, and the first member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was a lawyer¹

The Government of India never answered these contentions of the Hindu professional classes,² which were in the main correct. But they satirized in sarcastic vein the claim of these educated classes to represent the needs and sentiments of the masses.³ In this the Government of India was right, but by what logic and facts the Government arrived at the conclusion that the princes, landed magnates, industrial and commercial classes, Moslem professional classes, could represent the needs and sentiments of the masses is unexplained and inexplicable. The landholders, industrial and commercial classes, and Moslem professional classes certainly were not "competent advisers," "the best minds of the people," from whom "advice and opinion" could be obtained regarding the needs and sentiments of the masses, no more than were the Hindu professional classes. Since the avowed objects of the Government had no requisite foundation in these classes, the only conclusion, on circumstantial evidence, is that the object of the Government in extending the base of representation to them was to set up these classes one against another in a council where they had

actually they do not fill?" (This was a note from the Chief Commissioner to the Central Provinces.)

Report of the Board of Education of the Bombay Presidency for the year 1850-1851. "The wealthy are wholly indifferent to superior education" (para 20) quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol III, p 109

¹ Mary Minto, *op cit*, p 213 (Minto to Morley, July 1, 1908) "Natives have shown a peculiar aptitude for the profession of law, and I think it is in this direction that we find it best to advance Sinha, the present advocate-general, and Mukherji, I have mentioned to you before as possible selections." Sinha was chosen in the end. Minto was wrong in the opinion that "natives have shown a peculiar aptitude for the profession of law." The real reason is they have gone to the profession of law as the most lucrative profession, an attractive means of livelihood for an educated Indian, not because they have a special aptitude for it.

² R E Enthoven to the Secretary to the Government of India No 1768 of 1908 dated March 26, 1908, Enclosure XVII, p 1 (Cd 4435, 1908) "In one respect, a certain unanimity may be traced among bodies and individuals representing educated native opinion."

³ R E Enthoven, *op cit*, p 1 "The educated classes, although a very small minority, appear to claim to represent the interests of all sections of the people, and are inclined to oppose any measures which appear likely to lessen their influence."

no power, where most of them could make no speeches¹ This is the second defect of the principle of representation of communities, classes, and interests.

The third defect is this Gladstone, in his speech in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill of 1892, remarked on this principle of representation "There are of course dangers in their way There is the danger of subserviency There is the danger of having persons who represent cliques, classes, or interests, and who may claim the honour of representing the people of India."² His fears were by no means unfounded. The elective principle under the disguise of nomination upon recommendation which the regulations of 1893 had practically admitted, and the reforms of 1909 legally recognized,³ created a class of sycophants, a class of traders in politics and opposition, liberal lawyers, professional oppositionists who by their speeches and writings made familiar to the Indian ear the language of constitutionalism, like Sinha, Gokhale, Banerje, Nair, and others. These are the type of moderates whom the Government tried, and even today does try, to rally to their side. Helping to support the prestige of the Government, ranging on the side of law and order, which means support of the policy of repression, is the keynote of the Indian moderate school of politics. The councils are an index to the presence of persons who represent cliques or interests, and whose debates are of little theoretical value. This is another drawback of the principle of representation of communities, interests, and classes.

The fourth defect is this. When once this principle came to be recognized there was a tendency for an artificial crop of

¹ For the unreality of the proceedings in the Minto-Morley councils, see Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 83 p. 74: "The debates lack life unless feelings are aroused or interests are directly affected."

² Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, fourth series vol. lli (March 28 to May 2, 1892), p. 81

Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 86, p. 73 But the official obligation (nominated official Indian members) to vote with the government in an Indian legislative council is continuing and is not made palatable by any necessity of securing an irremovable government from demise, and as Mr Gladstone saw many years ago, the conflict between conscience and discipline may become acute."

Montagu-Chelmsford Report 1918 para. 77 p. 66

interests and classes. The Muslim League came into being on the eve of the announcement of reforms. The Anglo-Indians also pressed for their representation as a community.¹ The collector of Godaverı suggested the representation of missions.² Classes like the landed magnates, merchant, and commercial classes which never put demands as classes before,³ now were confirmed in their demands for representation.⁴ The Government of India Reform Despatch noted "*Comparatively few opinions have been received from the commercial and industrial classes, but all of them, whether European or Indian, agree in complaining that their interests have received insufficient considerations, and that they ought to have more members on the Imperial Legislative Council*"⁵ In this manner, classes which had not organized themselves up to now began to organize, and by the time that Montagu visited India there was a phenomenal growth of associations of various classes all over the country. An instance can be given from the despatch itself. "None of the local governments suggest any practicable arrangement for the representation of Indian commerce by means of election, but we are disposed to think *if two permanent seats are assigned to that interest, associations will in course of time be formed which will be sufficiently stable and representative to admit of their being utilized as electoral agencies*"⁶ Lord Morley concurred in this view.⁷

¹ Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India, February 12, 1908, Enclosure XV (VII), Cd 4435, 1908, p 38

² R Dis 52-Rev Enclosure XV (XXXVII), Cd 4435, 1908, p 187

³ R E Craddock, op cit, p 2 (Enclosure XXIV, Cd 4435, 1908) "Can it hope to satisfy the claims of the educated section of the people for enlarged powers in affairs of administration by attempting to give more weight and power in the land *to a class which have never put forward such a demand?*"

⁴ Government of India Despatch 1908, op cit, p 272 "From the landholders, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, the scheme has met with a generally favourable reception"

⁵ Government of India Reform Despatch 1908, op cit, p 273, para 2

⁶ Ibid, para 31, p 295

⁷ Despatch from the Secretary of State (Lord Morley) to the Government of India, No 193, dated London, November 27, 1908 (in Mukherji, op cit, vol 1, p 317, para 15) "The due representation of the Indian mercantile community, on which you touch in paragraph 31 of your letter, might be included in the scheme, if the commercial classes fail to organize themselves, as you suggest that they may arrange to do, in associations similar to the European Chambers of Commerce"

This was a direct incentive to the formation of such associations On account of such artificial growth of associations in our own day, the principle of representation is carried even to the inclusion of women. One will not be surprised if this is extended to cow-protectionists and loom-cloth wearers in future. ✓

To sum up, the defects of the principle of representation of communities, classes, and interests are four

- ✓ 1 The classification adopted by the Government of India is unscientific, full of cross-divisions, ignoring the real nationalities or historical communities
- ✓ 2. The objects for which the Government sought to extend this principle to landowning, merchant and commercial classes, and the Moslem professional classes were not fully substantiated. The objections of the Indian professional classes to the British arguments were not answered. The land-owners were below the educational level of the professional classes. The merchant and commercial classes took very little to education. The professional classes alone, at this stage, were the educated leaders.¹ All these classes did no more represent the masses than did the Hindu professional classes.
- ✓ 3 This principle created a school of Indian moderate politics.
- ✓ 4. It led to an artificial crop of associations, interests, and classes on purely religious lines. After the Moslems, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians, the Untouchables, and so on, followed.

The Government of India did not notice these defects, nor the invalidity of their objects. They succeeded in their real object. Other things mattered little, and the real object of communal electorates was to set up a Moslem professional class as a counterpoise against the Hindu professional class, after creating landed, merchant, and commercial limited electorates which returned their respective classes.² Herein lies the origins of the theory of communal representation.

¹ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 139 p. 115 "Helped by the inability of the other classes in India to play a prominent part he (the educated Indian) has assumed the place of leader."

² Cf. Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 75 p. 65 "It is probable that the far-reaching consequences of this decision and the difficulties which it (communal representation) creates at a later stage were not fully foreseen."

Summary

THE Indian Mutiny provided the basis for a new type of imperialism¹ By this I mean that British policy in India since the Mutiny has been a combination of liberal and imperialist policies. The policy of counterpoise is one aspect of such a new imperialism. It is both liberal and imperialist, liberal in that it recognizes and concedes the claims of the classes as they arise, and imperialist in the sense that what is conceded is always circumscribed by imperial interests utilizing the rivalries of various classes and interests. The liberal-imperialist policy is the culmination and the logical outcome of the previous policies.

One of the causes of the Mutiny, as the English learned by themselves and from Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, was the exclusion of Indians from a share in the administration of the country. The desire to redress this grievance and the need for "a cheap native agency" led to the recognition of the right of the Indians to a share in the administration. The result was the opening of the civil service to the Indians in the beginning. As the English-educated classes grew, the demand for a share increased proportionately. To curb the power of these classes various means were tried by the British. A council of princes was sought as a means to counter the aims of these classes. The claims of the princes were incessantly championed by the British in the form of one scheme or other. The next class they favoured was the land-owning feudal class, which is the creation of the British.² This resulted in the need to adjust the relations between the landlords and the privileged tenants by a mediatorial policy. So far the policy of countering the aims of one class by another was confined in general to those of the

¹ D. Woodruff, "Expansion and Emigration" in *Early Victorian England, 1830-1865*, edited by G. M. Young (2 vols.), vol. 1, pp. 363, 404.

² Taxation Enquiry Committee, 1928, vol. 1, p. 82

same faith. Nomination to the councils was the first method used in recognizing the claims of the classes, particularly those who were estranged by the Mutiny. When the elective principle was introduced, the only practicable way to make it effective, the Government thought, was by the representation of communities, classes, and interests. The bases necessary for recognition of separate interests and classes were already there when Minto came to the scene. When the professional classes were getting stronger, Minto extended this principle to the Moslems, treating them as a separate community. This is how communal representation came into being.

The treatment of these classes by the British was unequal. They favoured the princes, the landed classes, and the privileged tenants more than the professional classes. They were all pacified, but the professional classes were singled out for attack. The Government used the other classes always as a counterpoise against the professional classes, who at that time were thought to be its most dangerous enemies. But when the working-class representatives came on the scene, they were singled out for attack as once the professional classes were. The policy adapted itself to the situation of the time, according to the political and revolutionary strength of the class.

The main theoretical idea of this policy is the "principle of communities, classes, and interests." Its defects are easily obvious. Its interpretation is political. Its classification is erroneous. Its objects are not fully substantiated. The content of this theory is simple. From the beginning this idea has nothing to do with formal democracy. It is solely concerned with a balance of interests, classes, and certain religious adherents (communities), as each interest and class clamoured for power.

Part II

*History of the Idea of Communal
Representation, 1909-1935*

I

Organization of the Professional Classes

1905-1909

THE next milestone in the history of communal representation is the Montford Act of 1919. Both the Minto-Morley and Montford reforms were the outcome of the persistent struggles of the professional and industrialist classes against the Government. They were concessions given to the educated classes by the Government.

The history of the organization of these classes is important for three reasons: firstly, it is an index to their growth and strength, secondly, to the concessions granted to these classes by the Government, thirdly, to the counterpoise policy that the Government pursued against them. In the chapter on the origins of communal representation we have briefly sketched the organization of these classes on the eve of the Minto-Morley reforms. In this chapter the history of these classes is fully dealt with, showing that the history of communal representation is one of struggles between the various classes, and of the policy of counterpoise pursued by the Government against these classes. While the organization of the professional classes made rapid strides during the years 1905-1909, preceding the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909, the history of the organization of the educated aristocracy goes back much further than 1905. It can be chronicled from the various Acts passed by the Government of India since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Council Act of 1861 was passed only four years after the Mutiny. It was a concession to the educated aristocracy who were organized in the British Indian Association, already in existence six years before the Mutiny, and the Bombay Association that came into existence at about the same time.

Jagganath Sankersett was the first non-official member of the Bombay Legislative Council established in 1863.

The Council Act of 1892 is another index to the growth of the professional classes, and to the concessions given to these classes. Between 1861 and 1892 education made rapid progress. New universities were established in the Punjab in 1882, and at Allahabad in 1887. The University of Calcutta was overburdened with a multitude of students. In the first fifteen years of the century the number of students in colleges rose from 11,000 to 23,000, and of pupils in secondary schools from 429,000 to 633,000. The educational policy of the Government of India favoured the rise of a class of educated Indians. This was the class that Macaulay called "a class Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." It would be more correct to say "English in outlook," so far as political thought is concerned. In 1858 they were few in number, but with the establishment of the universities they began to grow. In the latter part of the period they grew with great and ever-increasing rapidity.¹

The organizations of these classes also grew rapidly. The Bombay Association, which did not survive more than a decade, was revived in 1870, and galvanized into fresh life by Naoroji Furdunji in 1873. In the Southern Presidency the Madras Native Association sprang up. At Poona the Sarva Janika Sabha was started towards the middle of the seventies. These were practically all the important public bodies in the country between the fifties and the early seventies of the last century.²

✓ In 1876 came the Indian Association, with the object of organizing a system of active political propaganda throughout the country. Its moving spirit was Surendra Nath Bannerjee. He made his first tour in 1877 all through northern India, from Benares to Rawalpindi. In 1878 he made a second tour

¹ Verney Lovett, "The Growth of Educational Policy" in *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, pp. 335-56.

² Ibid., p. 355. "The system initiated in 1854 has produced a long line of excellent public servants, of writers and public men acquainted not only with the English language but with English ideals and English methods."

² A. C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, p. 6.

through western and southern India, holding meetings at Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad, Poona, and Madras¹

At the insistence of the Indian Association a National Conference was held in 1883 at Calcutta. The old Madras Native Association dragged on for some years, and died a natural death. In 1884 came the Madras Mahajana Sabha. A provincial conference was held under its auspices similar to the Calcutta National Conference. Bombay was not without its share. The Bombay Presidency Association came into being on January 31, 1885. The Indian National Congress, which came finally into being, united all these strands. The Maharajah of Darbhanga as representative of the Bihar Landholders Association was present at its first meeting. It was only natural that at the Second Congress the old aristocracy should be absent. From 1885 to 1892 the Congress conducted a vigorous propaganda. Its object was to win power and recognition. The debates on the second reading of the India Council Act of 1892 show that the Congress won the recognition of the ruling class.² The reward for their agitation was the concessions of 1892. Given the social economy prevailing before and after the Mutiny, the nature of the British political and educational policies, the emergence of classes and organizations, the struggles among themselves and against the Government are natural.



The reforms of 1909 are another index to the growth of a new class in addition to the existing professional ones. They are also an index to "more concessions given to these classes. This period 1905-1909 was entirely different from the previous one, which was of a colonial-capitalist development, the present one is a period of economic changes in an epoch of imperialism. New classes and new alignments arose.

¹ Surendra Nath Bannerje, *A Nation in the Making* (The Indian Association) chapter v pp 40-55.

Hamard's *Parliamentary Debates*, fourth series, vol. iii, 1892, p. 67. Curzon: "At present the sole vent that is available for that body of opinion is in the native press and in organized meetings such as the Indian National Congress."

P. 71 Mr. Schwann: "Well, I have said that India has a national voice, and that voice is the Indian National Congress."

P. 100 Temple denied the representative character of the Congress, but he admitted it represented the educated classes.

These were reflected in the structure of the Indian National Congress.

With the year 1880 may be dated the Indian industrial revolution. The processes at work may be dated as early as 1850. The development of plantation industries was the forerunner of the Indian industrial revolution. Two large centres of factory production were developed, one the cotton factories of Bombay, the other the jute mills of Bengal. Around this class of British and Indian industrialists emerged a class of field-factory proletariat.¹ The professional classes aimed at replacing a group of Britishers who still enjoyed a practical monopoly of medical, legal, and journalistic functions in India. The industrialist classes likewise aimed to replace the British monopoly of industries in India. The development of the largest Indian industry, cotton textiles, was against the interests of the British traders. The development of capitalism in India was of a colonial character. The social economy of the country, together with the rigid free trade policy of the British ruling class, hindered the interests of the rising industrialists. They had to fight against commercial discrimination.² They had to fight against the competition of foreign capital. They had to fight against free trade. Their watchword was swadeshism, protectionism. These rising industrialist classes naturally allied themselves with the professional classes.

In the early days of the Congress the old aristocracy, if it can be called an aristocracy, joined hands with the Congress.³ Later it withdrew. The differences of class interests between

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India 1931 Cmd 3883, pp 11-14

² A good instance of commercial discrimination at this time can be illustrated in the case of Tata

F R Harris, *J N Tata*, 1925, p 276 A Lancashire textile manufacturer charged him more than he would an Englishman for carding machines

Ibid, p 40 Mr Tata was always impatient over a burden placed upon Indian manufacturers

Ibid, pp 101-2 *Lindisfarne*, an Indian vessel, was privately reported as unfit. This attempt to disparage the vessel in the marine market was resented. He wrote a pamphlet, *The War of Freights*

Ibid, pp 61-62 His protest against tariffs was contained in *The Cotton Industry of India and the Cotton Duties*, Bombay, 1902

³ A C Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, p 53

Surendra Nath Bannerje, *A Nation in the Making*, 1925, p 98

B C Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times in the Days of My Youth*

these two associations can be seen in this incident. "To protest against the Press Act of Lytton, the Indian Association convened a public meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta at the town hall. The British Indian Association, representing the Bengal Zamindars, refused to join the meeting. But the educated middle class not only of Calcutta and Bengal but practically of the other provinces also fully supported this protest of the Indian Association."¹

The advent of the industrialist classes into the ranks of the Congress effected a new alignment of class forces and class ideology in the Congress. It hastened the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907 into extremists and moderates. Tilak explained this cleavage as one based on differences in methods of work and not on principles.² The split arose out of a difference of principles as well. Gokhale protested against what he called the "narrow, exclusive, and intolerant spirit in which advocates of Swadeshi seek to promote their cause."³

Nothing is more illuminating than the comparative study of Gokhale, G. K. (1866-1915) and Tilak, B. G. (1856-1920). Both were Chitpavan brahmins. Both hailed from Maharashtra. Gokhale was honoured by the ruling class. Tilak was sent to Mandalay. Gokhale was a political mendicant and a trained official. Tilak was a leader and an agitator. Tilak was more to the masses than Gokhale. Morley wrote to Minto on October 31, 1907: "I have often thought that during the last twelve months that Gokhale, as a party manager, is a baby. A party manager, or, for that matter, any politician, aspiring to be a leader should never whine. Gokhale is always whining, just like the second rate Irishmen between Dan O'Connell and Parnell."⁴ But Tilak never whined. "He developed a language and spirit, and he used methods which Indianized the movement and brought

(1857-1884), p. 436 (the First National Conference, 1883 December 28-30)

So far as Bengal was concerned, the two prominent political groups, one representing the landed aristocracy of the province, the British Indian Association, and the other representing the growing power of the educated middle class, the Indian Association, were united at this conference."

¹ B. C. Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, p. 288

² B. G. Tilak, *Speeches and Writings*, p. 210

Quoted in F. Youngblood, *Dawn in India*, 1930, p. 33.

⁴ Mary Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 161

into it the masses ”¹ It is interesting to note what Minto had to say of Tilak. He wrote to Morley on August 5, 1908. “He is recognized throughout India as the arch-leader of sedition ”² May we ask Minto by whom? If the ruling class tried to rally the moderates to their side, Tilak rallied to his cause the rising industrialists, and the rising discontent of the workers and the masses born at the nascent industrialism

At Surat ended the career of the old guard of the Indian National Congress which became the new guard for the maintenance of British prestige and British law and order. At Surat began the school of Indian moderate politics The school of Tilak stood for a mass basis of the Nationalist movement The school of Gokhale stood for constitutionalism To these classes were added the students, merchants, petty traders, shop-keepers, money-lenders, clerical employees, and all the lower strata of the middleclass The front of the Nationalist movement widened

The alliance between the professional classes and the rising industrialists found expression in the Swadeshi movements ³ It was suggested by these allies that there should be an Indian industrial exhibition to promote Indian industries, in connection with the Congress This exhibition was regarded by the Government as an annex of the Congress ⁴ The political enthusiasm of this movement was linked with the fervour to uplift industrial status, stifled by British policy ⁵ The Swadeshi

¹ Aurobindo Ghose, “An Appreciation of Tilak” (in *B G Tilak's Speeches and Writings*, third edition, Madras, 1922), p 6

² Mary Minto, op cit , p 247

³ To give one instance, Tata (F R Harris, *J N Tata*, p 49) “Mr Tata was in sympathy with the Congress Party He decided to associate his firm with the development of a true Swadeshi movement To him the industrial advance of India was to be the vindication of her growing aspirations and her demand for constitutional self-government ”

Pp 266-67 On one occasion a friend said to him “You can have no concern with the Congress You are not a native of India ” Mr Tata replied sharply “If I am not a native of India, what am I?”

P 267 He was in the fullest sympathy with the aims of the Congress

P 60 “Like all Indians he was a protectionist,” writes one of his friends

⁴ Surendra Nath Bannerje, *A Nation in the Making*, p 146 Sir John Woodroffe, when appealed to for help by Bannerje, wrote “Mr Bannerje, after all your exhibition is an annex of the Congress The political flavour is strong in it I am sorry I cannot undertake to open your exhibition ”

⁵ Honourable Justice Ranade, *Essays on Indian Economics*, third edition, p 92

movement was in spirit protectionist.¹ It stimulated soap and cotton factories. Cotton mills were started one after another. Weaving received an impetus of its own. Indian capital flowed in.² Swadeshi made banking facilities indispensably necessary. It gave a stimulus to the inauguration of insurance companies under Indian management. A Bengal National Bank was started.³ The professional classes, like the industrial, had interest in Swadeshim, because some of the Indian capital for this movement came from these classes.⁴ It was just at this juncture that the Moslem professional class came to organized existence in 1906.

To the industrial policy of the Government which stifled the aspirations of the industrialist class, and to the exploitation of the country as a market and source of raw materials, was added a further exploitation through a big development of capital export. The general reaction was felt not by one class,

¹ Bennerje, *A Nation in the Making* pp 198-99

² Indian Industrial Commission 1915-1918 Minutes of Evidence, vol. 1 (Cmd. 234 1919), p 1. Capital for industrial enterprises is principally drawn from surplus profits, in Calcutta and Bombay from bazaars, in the districts mainly from professional men."

P 126 *Middle-class Indians* following professional occupations, such as lawyers, doctors and the clerical staff of business concerns seem to be the class most ready to invest their savings in public investments."

³ Bennerje, *A Nation in the Making* pp 207-9

Cf Vera Anstey *Economic Development of India*, 1929 p 407. In 1906 an era of rapid expansion of joint stock banking began in connection with the economic aspects of the Swadeshi movement of that time."

⁴ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission 1916-1918, Cmd. 51 (1919), p 64. "The castes which exhibit the highest degree of intelligence are, with few exceptions, those whose functional characteristics have in the past been religious leadership, government service or trade, and it is from these that the leading Indian industrialists, financiers and merchants have hitherto been mostly drawn. The failure of the more intellectual classes to take advantage of the new prospects was especially marked in Bengal, where it contrasts with the success of local European enterprise."

Ibid. p 66. "a popular effort to promote indigenous industrial enterprise was taken up by the educated classes in most parts of India, especially in Bengal. Mr Justice Ranade was the leading exponent of the new views which involved an appeal to Indian capitalists to invest their funds more largely in industry and to the younger members of the literary castes to abandon their traditional aversion from manual labour and to fit themselves for industrial enterprise. The Indian Industrial Conference started in 1905 expressly to further this cause has met regularly every year since, and has devoted itself to the dissemination of industrial information and to a propaganda of its views among the educated classes."

but by all classes. The discontent against this policy found expression during this period in the terrorist movement and the mass leadership of Tilak, bursting into mass struggles in 1907-1909. As a result Tilak was despatched to Mandalay

The terrorist movement of this period was attributed to the emotionalism of Bengal as though "emotions" are independent of our existence and consciousness. According to the Sedition Committee report of 1918, the terrorist movement in Bombay—the report called it the revolutionary movement—was of brahmin origin, mostly Chitpavan.¹ Are the Bombay brahmins too emotional? The India report of 1932-1933 stated "Its (terrorism's) centre has always been Bengal, but from time to time it has been temporarily extended thence, first to Northern India, and more recently to the Madras Presidency and Assam."² Are these people also emotional? Surendranath Bannerje gave a partial account of the causes of terrorism. It was *the atmosphere of mistrust, of hopelessness* created by the acts of the administration that was the cause of terrorism.³ Terrorism is a form of crude protest, arising under conditions of despotism, partaking of the backward and undisciplined class character of the perpetrators. It was born of despair.⁴ As the Sedition Committee Report said, the young men in Bengal belonged to the educated, disillusioned middle classes.⁵ A C Mazumdar found the causes of terrorism and anarchism to be more economic than political.⁶ Middle-class unemployment was said to be the cause of this movement. But not all of them joined the ranks of the anarchists. "Terrorism, anarchism, and nihilism are methods of action used by revolutionary movements in countries where there is no freedom of political action, and where there is not yet a fully developed popular movement."

A connection between the Congress and this movement is often alleged by the police.⁷ The European Association was

¹ Sedition Committee Report, 1918, pp. 13, 180.

² India 1932-33, pp. 51, 54-55.

³ S N Bannerje, *A Nation in the Making*, p. 234.

⁴ S C Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, p. 336.

⁵ Sedition Committee Report, pp. 111 ff., 180.

⁶ A C Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, p. 249.

⁷ Mills Joint Committee Evidence, vol. 11 C, pp. 2019, 2024-25, 2041-42.

also of this view¹ B. C. Chatterje asserted that the calendar of crimes of terrorists showed not a single Moslem. "All the articulate classes in Bengal—co-operators and non-co-operators alike—with one voice condemned the anarchical movement."²

The Indian working-class-field factory proletariat for the first time took part in the national liberation movement. In Bombay, a general strike of the textile workers ended in three days' street fighting. It was during this period of the incubation of concessions, 1906-1909, that the Indian proletariat has 'grown up to a conscious political mass struggle.'³ A number of strikes in various industries occurred at this period. Serious disputes took place between 1906-1909 on the railways. In 1909 a meeting of the Bombay factory workers was held condemning some of the practices of the employers. At this time every mill, every tea-garden, and every coal mine was assailed. Under the threat of this growing national movement the ruling class gave more concessions.

¹ Mills Joint Committee Evidence, vol. II C., pp 444-45

² Memorandum 61 by B. C. Chatterje, *Ibid.*, p 1394.

³ Lenin, *Inflammatory Material in World Politics* Quoted in Fox, *op cit.*, p 72.

Organization of the Commercial and Industrialist Classes

1914-1919

THE revolutionary phase of the movement continued to the years 1914-1919. All classes—the professional, the industrial and labour, together with the lower strata of the middle classes,—against the Government, and nascent struggles among themselves—this was the order of the day. The imperialist World War brought unprecedented prosperity for the leading industries of India. This was the logical outcome of the previous industrial development during the years between 1900 and 1914. During the period 1914-1918, the production of cotton piece goods was doubled. The output of the jute mills and woollen mills was nearly trebled. Leather factories multiplied by more than tenfold. Iron and steel industries showed a remarkable expansion. The necessities of the war period of 1914-1919 have effectively served to canalize and consolidate her industrial achievements. The Indian capitalists felt still more the shackles of industrial policy pursued by the Government. A liberal start was made at Madras. A separate provincial Department of Industries was instituted in 1906, with Mr Chatterton as “the director of industrial and technical enquiries.” The policy of the new department was eagerly welcomed by the Indian public. On the other hand, its operations, especially with regard to chrome leather, had already begun to create alarm in European business circles, where they were viewed as “serious menace to private enterprise and an unwarrantable intervention on the part of the State in matters beyond the sphere of government.”¹ Lord Morley took the view of the European traders. He negatived the proposals of

¹ Report of the Industrial Commission, op cit, p 70, para 107.

the Madras Government
national Department.

Lord Morley's decision
out India. An agitation
was organized. In a
the Government of
afresh with the India
clear," so ran the demand
policy of improving
have to be pursued.
appointment of an Indian
tions to examine and
industrial development
classes in India. But
the tariff from the
resented by them. The
Select Committee on
pelled to recommend
tary of State in his decision
this recommendation.
classes in India who
industries.¹

Just as the professional
have administrative
reforms," the industrial
few commercial concessions
reforms.²

ment for the establishment of a separate
of Industries.¹

decision aroused great dissatisfaction throughout
on in favour of a more progressive policy.
Despatch of November 26, 1915, therefore,
Lord Hardinge examined the question
lia Office. It is becoming increasingly
Despatch, "that a definite and self-conscious
the industrial capabilities of India will
after the war."² The next year saw the
Indian Industrial Commission with instructions
report upon the possibilities of further
development. This was a sop to the industrialist
the specific exclusion of the question of
terms of reference of the commission was
they continued their agitation till the Joint
the Government of India Bill felt compelled
full fiscal autonomy for India. The Secretary
Despatch of June 30, 1921, to India accepted
This was a victory for the industrialist
demanded protection for their young

industrial classes at this time were content to
have "a million times more than political
industrial classes also were content to have a
few concessions, a million times more than political

¹ Despatch No. 50, Revenue, dated 29th of July 1910. Quoted in P. P. Pillai, *Economic Conditions in India*, p. 311.

² Quoted in P. P. Pillai, "The Manufacturer" (in *India Analyzed*, vol. II), pp. 88-89.

On October 7, 1921, a Fiscal Commission was appointed to examine Indian tariff policy. It recommended discriminating protection. Following its recommendations, a Tariff Board was set up. While this did not concede all the demands of the industrialist classes, it was welcomed by these classes as a partial concession.

³ The 27th, 28th, 29th Sessions of the Indian National Congress demanded protection of industries in their resolutions V, XIII and XV respectively in 1912, 1913, and 1914. Annie Besant, *How India Wrought Her Freedom*, 1915, pp. 56-57.

⁴ Cf. F. Engels, *Germany's Revolution and Counter Revolution*, 1933, pp. 12-13. While speaking of the German bourgeoisie on the eve of the

Meanwhile, the Mohammedan professional classes were likewise undergoing changes and alignments. The partition of Bengal and the concession of communal representation secured their loyal support to the British ruling class¹ Morley announced that the partition was effected for administrative convenience. Bengal was unquestionably too large a charge for any single man. So they said But in truth the partition was aimed at dismembering politically dominant Bengal. East Bengal, which was predominantly peopled by Moslems, was separated from the rest of Bengal as a territorial counterpoise against the Hindu professional classes. In the name of efficiency the partition of Bengal effected a masterful territorial counterpoise²

The partition was denounced by the Hindu professional classes. They denounced it in the name of dismembering a "nationality." But in reality the Calcutta Bar saw that the creation of a new province must inevitably lead, in the course of time, to the creation of a separate High Court, and would diminish the business of their own High Court. Therefore, all the wealth and weight of the great horde of Calcutta lawyers and their underlings was thrown into the fight against the scheme. The journalists feared the appearance of new provincial newspapers which would restrict the circulation of the Calcutta press. On the other hand, the Moslems were pleased because they were in a majority in East Bengal. But the re-partition of Bengal in 1911 angered the Moslems³

Revolution of 1848, Engels wrote, "Every political defeat of the middle class drew after it a victory in the field of commercial legislation, and certainly the Prussian Protective Tariff of 1818, and the formation of the Zollverein, were worth a good deal more to the traders and manufacturers of Germany than the equivocal right of expressing in the chambers of some diminutive dukedom their want of confidence in ministers who laughed at their votes"

¹ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, p 22

² Sir Henry Cotton, *New India or India in Transition*, London, 1909, pp 11-12 "The sinister object of the measure was to shatter the unity and to disintegrate the feelings of solidarity which are established in the province It was no administrative reason that lay at the root of this scheme It was part and parcel of Lord Curzon's policy to enfeeble the growing power and destroy the political tendencies of a patriotic spirit"

³ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, p 23 "The re-partition of Bengal and also the check to the hopes entertained of a great Muhammadan university depressed the minds of many honest Moslems with a sense of their inefficiency They felt their political weakness compared to the Hindu . "

Just as the Hindu professional classes took to the cause of "anti partition," so also the Moslem professional classes took to the cause of the Khalifate. This time they had no leader like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who could have dissuaded them from taking to such a cause. Younger members of the Muslim League began to get more and more uneasy. The Hindu professional classes wanted allies. They supported the Khalifate movement. The Moslem professional classes wanted allies. They supported the Indian National Congress. This alliance on the question of the Khalifate was a great landmark in the history of common mass agitation against imperialism. The masses of both faiths came together in joint demonstrations and meetings of protest against imperialist repression. Agreement for united action on specific issues became the instrument of drawing the Moslem masses into the orbit of national struggle. But the issue of the Khalifate was religious, sentimental, and anti-progressive. While it furthered anti imperialist struggle its introduction into Indian politics, as Subhas Chandra Bose wrote, was unfortunate. No movement can thrive unless its ideas are objective. In later years the Young Turks themselves threw over the Khalifate. The Khalifate organizations became transformed into reactionary ones. Gandhi bears the greatest share in this Himalayan blunder. During these years of Khalifate agitation the Muslim League was out of sight. It did not come back to life until after the abolition of Khalifate.

In 1913 the Muslim League proclaimed its adoption of the cause of self-government. Just as 1907 witnessed the split of Hindu professional classes into extremists and moderates at Surat, so also 1913 witnessed the split of the Moslem professional classes into loyalists and "supporters of the Congress creed." When the League adopted the resolution of self-government within the Empire in 1913, conservative Moslems regarded the proposal as a departure from their fixed policy and destructive to their interests as a minority in India. Others thought the aim was not high enough, and desired identity with that expressed by the Congress. Soon after, the Aga Khan resigned the presidency of the League. In 1916 the Congress and the League came formally together, while the

conservative portion of Moslem opinion remained outside this concordat.¹

✓ The agreement between the League and the Congress in 1916 represents the beginning of the united front of the Hindu and Moslem professional classes. The Moslems realized that their interests were identical with the Hindus as long as the British ruled India, and that loyalty did not pay in the epoch of imperialism. They felt the same needs as the extremist Hindu professional classes did in 1907. This alliance between the Hindu and the Moslem professional classes and their combined agitation led to the announcement of the reforms in 1918. This in turn led to the rise of several artificial organizations of the Moslem professional classes, just as the announcement of the reforms in 1907 led to the rise of similar organizations of the Hindu professional classes.²

Meanwhile, the Hindu professional classes were having acute dissensions. In 1916 a rapprochement was effected at Lucknow between the extremists and the moderates. This did not last long. In 1918 the extremists, hitherto in the minority, became the majority. The moderates, now in the minority, seceded from the Congress and started the All-India Liberal Federation. This was the occasion of the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. Lala Lajpat Rai, while writing during the years of the war, observed. "The Indian politicians may

¹ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, p. 24

² E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, p. 45. "The United Provinces Moslem Defence Association after explaining that they had come into existence a few weeks ago to represent the more conservative Mohammadanism that was unrepresented by the Moslem League, they presented us with a scheme which was lifted almost bodily with a few reservations from the Congress Moslem League scheme. When we asked them why they had advocated this scheme they said 'Oh, I had come out to do something, and if something was done they wanted this sort of thing done.'"

Ibid, pp. 49-50. "The Hindu Sabha is chiefly conspicuous for having adopted the main principles of the Congress Moslem League scheme, but they objected to communal representation for Mohammedans. It was an amusing feature that Mr. Saran Das, who was a member of this deputation, had also been to a deputation the day before, demanding communal representation. We tackled him with this, and he explained that he was anxious not to quarrel with the Mohammedans. His views were against it, but if they got it, why should he appear as one who had opposed it, so he joined both deputations. This is a feature of deputations which makes them almost impossible."

roughly be divided into three classes the extremists who base their propaganda on fundamental grounds, the moderates, and the out-and-out loyalists"¹

The split of the Congress at Surat was a few years before the concession of 1909 That of 1918 was on the eve of further concessions That of 1932-1935 was also on the eve of concessions The current dissensions on the question of Federation are significant.

While the differentiation of the classes was going on within the older organizations according to the situation of the day, the communal organizations were becoming increasingly heard. "Their avowed object is to secure the loaves and fishes for members of their own community The Anglo-Indians, the Indian Christians, the Sikhs, and the Depressed Classes have their own parties to safeguard their own interests, that is, to secure as much of the loaves and fishes as possible while the political parties have a political programme and carry on some sort of agitation against or opposition towards the Government, the communal parties are more concerned with dividing amongst themselves such of the crumbs that are thrown at them from the official tables"² The Congress itself arose as a movement for political jobs It later moved towards self-government within the Empire, towards Home Rule, and now towards Independence. While the Congress is moving towards independence from British imperialism, the communalists are moving towards dependence on imperialism.

At the same time, a mass movement faintly begun in 1906 was beginning to come into organized existence at the end of the imperialist war The impoverishment of the ryots,³ the terrible conditions of labour,⁴ the growth of political conscious

¹ Lala Lajpat Rai *Reflections on the Political Situation in India* pp 33-37

² S. C. Bose *The Indian Struggles* pp 40-41

The report of the Government Health Department on the population of Bengal for 1927 had to admit that "The Bengal peasantry feed so badly that even rats could not live longer than five weeks on such a diet."

⁴ During the years 1914-1919 prices rose high. Wages fell low The meagre earning of a worker fell too low for him to support himself In addition, overcrowding and lack of proper housing added to his miseries. For the income of the industrial worker at this time see Royal Commission on Labour p 196

ness among the urban workers,¹ the discontent of the demobilized field-factory soldiers—all contributed to a great mass movement. The professional classes did not fail to utilize this mass discontent as far as it suited them.

In the face of the combined strength of the professional classes (Hindu and Moslem), the industrialist classes, the lower strata of the middle classes, the student classes, and the rising workers, concessions could not be withheld, and they were given in 1919.

Here was a grand opportunity for the Government of India to revise its ideas of communities, classes, and interests. But it undid the partition of Bengal without in any way understanding the problem of nationalities. It dropped the question of boundaries. It failed to see for all outward purposes the increasing struggles between the various strata of the middle classes of both Hindu and Moslem faith. It did not analyse their class content. The nature of the origins and centres of nationalism in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, and Madras hardly attracted its attention.

The general crisis of capitalism began with the war of 1914–1918. The masses of the people were awakening to political life and consciousness. They were becoming an active aggressive factor against imperialism. The need for coercion, counterpoise, and concession was becoming increasingly felt. Determined in its policy of “counterpoises,” looking for classes for such purposes, and where they did not exist, creating them by some means or other, the Government of India tobogganed down the road of august blundering.

¹ As shown in strikes. In 1916 there was a general strike of textile workers, and the first half of 1917 saw a big strike which affected 120,000 workers. In 1918–1921 the country was shaken by a number of lengthy mass strikes. Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, Cmd 3883, 1931, p. 333. “The main cause was the realization of the potentialities of the strike in the existing situation.”

Andre Philip, *India: A Foreign View*, 1932, p. 162. “It was at Madras in 1918 that the first great labour organization, the Madras Labour Union, was founded, which soon numbered from 8,000 to 10,000 members.”

Further History of Communal Representation

By the Lucknow pact of December 1916 the Hindu professional classes reversed their opinions of 1908 on communal representation. They conceded communal representation to Moslems in order to win their support to the Congress.¹ The pact conceded them separate electorates. The joint authors who reported on Indian constitutional reforms stated that the Moslems regard separate representation and communal electorates as "their only adequate safeguard."² But they held the opinion that communal electorates are opposed to the teaching of history, perpetuate class divisions, stereotype existing relations, and are a very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle,³ yet they concluded that, "so far as the Moslems are concerned the present system must be maintained until conditions alter, even at the price of slower progress towards the realization of a common citizenship."⁴ The only limitation which they suggested was that communal representation for Moslems should not be set up in any province where they form a majority of the voters. They dismissed the claims of the other so-called minority communities. They made an exception in favour of Sikhs.⁵ They did not discuss whether the Sikhs are a historical community. They said that the Sikhs

¹ For a detailed account of the pact see Indian Statutory Commission Report, vol. iv pp 137-40.

² Montagu-Chelmsford Report para. 231 p 188.

³ *Ibid.*, paras 228-31 pp 186-88.

Cf. E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* p 100. "We must beware of this system which Morley introduced, for it is fatal to the democratization of institutions and causes disunion between the Hindu and the Mohammadan and we must not extend it more than we can help."

Ibid., p 115 (Tuesday December 18 1917): "I will not have any more communal representation. It was designed mistakenly I think, to give protection to backward communities. The Indians ought to stand on their own legs."

⁴ Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 231 p 188.

⁵ *Ibid.* para. 232 pp 188-89.

are a distinct and important people. They proposed to extend the system of communal representation to them. In this the authors missed an opportunity of raising the question of historical communities.

The Franchise Committee, in whose terms of reference the problem of communal electorates was expressly mentioned, decided that not merely Moslems must have separate representation in all provinces, but that there should also be separate communal representation for Sikhs in the Punjab; for Indian Christians in Madras, for Europeans in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, Bihar, and Orissa, for Anglo-Indians in Madras and Bengal.¹ The committee received a number of other claims to communal representation from the Mahishyas of Bengal and Assam, the Marwaris of Calcutta, the domiciled Bengali community of Bihar and Orissa, the Ahoms of Assam, the Mahars of the Central Provinces, the Oriyas of Madras, and the Parsis of Bombay. The committee dismissed these claims, but it did not discuss at all the point whether these communities are purely religious or historical communities. The Oriyas are a distinct people with linguistic and cultural traditions of their own. The committee merely lumped this community as one of the other spurious religious communities. The majority of the committee were of the opinion that no special treatment was required for the Maharattas and allied castes in the Deccan and southern divisions of the Bombay Presidency. Here, too, the committee did not discuss whether the Mahrattas constitute a historically lasting community like the Oriyas and the Sikhs. It further left the problems of the non-Brahmins undecided.²

The non-Brahmins of Madras claimed communal representation as a community. The significance of this movement in Madras is not fully realized. The most important leaders of this movement were P. T. Chetty, T. M. Nair, and A. P. Patro. Chetty and Nair are now dead. P. T. Chetty was a Tamil, and Nair a Malayalee. Patro is an Andhra. They belong to three distinct historical communities in the present Madras Presidency. This movement represents the emergence of the

¹ Franchise Committee, Cmd 141, paras 15-17, pp 7-8

² Franchise Committee, para 20, pp 8-10.

educated middle classes who are not Brahmins. The professional classes in Madras proper at that time consisted of Brahmins. Being the earliest class to take to education, they were the first to monopolize all posts in Madras proper. With the emergence of the professional classes other than Brahmin began the struggle between these two classes. The non-Brahmin professional classes are no more champions of social justice¹ than the Brahmin professional classes. Being late entrants into the field for loaves and fishes,² they find themselves handicapped by the monopoly of the Brahmin professional classes. As long as caste distinctions exist, they are used to bolster up all sorts of causes. These non-Brahmin professional classes who hail from three distinct communities in Madras Presidency, in the name of a Justice Party, oppose the monopoly of the Brahmin professional classes. The non-Brahmin movement of Madras Presidency is no other than the movement of the later educated middle classes, who happen to be non-Brahmins, against the earlier educated middle classes, who happened to be Brahmins.³

The emergence of this movement was a godsend to the Government. They found in it a wished for counterpoise against the Brahmin professional classes in Madras Presidency.⁴ The movement naturally spent its energies against the Brahmins rather than against the Government. It has, in its initial stages, been a humble petitioner.⁵ Later it declared itself in favour of full responsible government. The Justice

¹ As they claimed to be in their formation of the so-called "Justice Party."

² C. R. Das, *The Way to Swaraj* p. 49. And the result was when the non-Brahmanical cause had all but triumphed and the non-Brahmin party was in a majority the cause of the nation was absolutely forgotten in the quest of posts and the loaves and fishes of office."

³ This should not be pressed too rigidly. It does not mean that among the earliest educated middle classes in the Madras Presidency there were no non-Brahmins. Broadly speaking the earliest educated middle classes are the Brahmins. They monopolized all professions in the Presidency.

⁴ Cf. S. C. Bose, *The Indian Struggle* p. 41. "When the Government of India Act 1919 was under consideration, the late Dr. T. M. Nair of Madras was made a leader in London in opposition to the Congress leaders at the time."

⁵ Cf. H. S. Montagu *An Indian Diary* p. 118. What strikes me as so astounding about these non-Brahmanas is that although they are vigorous enough to object to the influence of the Brahmanas, they lie on their stomachs and appeal to the government for help instead of fighting; and although there is the beginning of the most promising party system here, they want

Party organized itself into "The South Indian Liberal Federation"¹ The change of name and declaration for responsible government do not alter the communal and reactionary nature of this body The Hindu Maha Sabha, the Muslim League, and the Depressed Classes Association are all for responsible government

It is generally believed that the officials were interested in the birth of the movement It came into existence during the days of the Home Rule agitation led by Mrs Besant The movement was in its early days either blessed or encouraged, if not inspired, by the Madras Government

The condemnation of communal electorates by the joint authors roused fears among the Moslem professional classes. Chelmsford made a reassuring statement on this question before opening the Imperial Legislative Council in September 1918 The Government of India, too, felt the objections in principle to the communal system as strongly as the joint authors But they saw no advantage at that stage in reiterating them² Yet they accepted the recommendation of the Franchise Committee that communal representation must be retained for Moslems and extended it in certain provinces to the other so-called minority communities They spoke again of the political importance and strength of the Moslem community without explaining wherein lies such strength and importance³ They agreed with the committee that there was no justification for admitting the claims for separate electorates put forward by the "smaller fry"

it by the horrible extension of communal representation" (Wednesday, December 19, 1917)

nesday, p 114 "They ask the government for protection instead of fighting for it" (Monday, December 17, 1917)

Ibid, Memorandum 23 Joint Committee, op cit, p 237

¹ See views of the Government of India are expressed in paras 18 to 27

² The Fifth Reforms Despatch No 4, dated April 23, 1919 Summarized in Indian Statutory Commission, vol iv, pp 143 ff

³ We may gather something of this from Ambedkar's speech "I cannot

understand how weightage can be allowed on the ground of political importance or loyalty or services rendered either to the Empire or to the British Government" As I have stated already, political importance of a community depends upon loyalty and services to the Government

⁴ Franchise Committee Report, para 18 We are at a loss to find the criterion of the Government is by which it judged the political importance of communities

The Joint Select Committee of Parliament went further than the Franchise Committee. They accepted the recommendations of the Franchise Committee in respect to the proportionate representation of Moslems, based on the Lucknow Pact. They considered that in the Madras Presidency the non Brahmins must be provided with separate representation by means of the reservation of seats. They recommended that similar treatment should be accorded to the Maharrattas

The problem of communal representation and communal electorates was discussed both in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. When the Government of India Bill was under consideration, Wedgwood on December 3, 1919, criticized both the Southborough Committee and the Joint Committee for "having widened enormously the scope of special representation." He expressed himself strongly on the evils of communal representation.¹ Montagu explained that no one objected to communal representation more than he did. He believed it to be a great mistake. But he added there was one mistake which would "be greater," and that would be to get legislative councils in India that were not properly representative of all classes. Montagu succumbed here to the dictates of the House of Commons. He forgot his expressions in his *Diary* and his verdict in the *Report*. He erred again in the matter of confounding classes with communities. If the principle of representation by classes is adhered to, it is not necessary to cross-divide them on the basis of religion and caste. This was an error of cross-division.² Spoor expressed himself to the effect that any form of communal representation was neither desirable nor necessary in the early stages of the transfer of powers.³ Others emphasized the strength of feeling in India for separate communal representation in accordance with the conditions of the country.⁴

In the House of Lords, criticism took a different line. Lord Curzon congratulated the Joint Select Committee 'on extend

¹ 122 H.C. Deb 3 S., p. 526

² *Ibid.*, p. 528.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 530

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 532. For instance, Oman spoke: "You have to look at the fact that these sectarian differences are still very bitter and communal representation is the only possible way out of it."

ing in some quarters communal representation”¹ Lord Ampthill moved an amendment to insert statutory provision to secure communal electorates for Moslems in all provinces, for Sikhs in Punjab, for Europeans in Bengal, and for Sudras among Hindus² Lord Lamington wanted reserved seats for the non-Brahmins by provision in the Act.³ Lord Sydenham said that if the principle of communal representation were recorded as part of the Bill, it would bring contentment and might prevent serious unrest among the non-Brahmins of southern India⁴ Lord Sinha stated that if in the opinion of the Government of India there were communities which required separate representation by communal electorates or by reservation of seats or otherwise, neither the Bill nor the Joint Select Committee’s Report precluded them from giving it⁵

The Government of India in consultation with various local governments revised its proposals. The second Joint Select Committee accepted some and proposed others. Finally, after much discussion, the Government of India Bill of 1919 was passed. It contained the following items regarding communal representation:

1. The separate Moslem electorates were retained
2. The Sikhs were also provided with a separate electoral roll and separate constituencies
3. The claims of the non-Brahmins of Madras Presidency were recognized.
4. The claims of the Maharattas and allied castes were recognized.
5. The nomination of members to represent Depressed Classes was recognized.
6. The representation of workers in organized industry was recognized
7. Separate electorates were recognized for Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans.
8. University representations were retained

¹ 37 H.L. Deb 5 S, p 1041

² Ibid, pp 116-18

³ Ibid, pp 155-56

⁴ Ibid, p 156

⁵ Ibid, p 160

9 Representation of other interests like those of chambers of commerce,¹ trade associations, mining and planting associations was also retained

In other words, the principle of communal representation was extended mostly to all sorts of religious groups, the classification of which does not correspond to actual historical communities

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. I pp 137-42

Role of Montagu in the Extension of the Idea of Communal Representation

LIKE Morley, Montagu must bear responsibility for the extension of this principle. Montagu expressed himself clearly in *Diary* against it. Both Montagu and Chelmsford openly condemned it in their joint report. So did the Statutory Commission.¹ The Government of India, too, recognized its evils: all of them not only retained this principle, but also extended it to other pseudo-communities.

In connection with the Indian Christians, Montagu wrote our next friends were the All-India Conference of Indian Christians. These people are going on fast. They number one and a half millions now, and will soon have four millions, they have four times the literacy in India, and the talk of communal representation for them with their mixed electorates is the most flagrant demand I have ever seen."² Yet Montagu conceded it to be conceded. He was contradictory in his convictions. On one hand, he expressed the view that he was against communal representation, on the other, he wrote that under circumstances it was unavoidable. In this he was quite like Morley. When Madhavarao told him that communal representation would accentuate and exasperate the feeling between Hindus and Mohammedans he wrote "Of course that is quite true, but to suggest that we could get rid of it now seems to me quite impossible. We are pledged up to the hilt, and we would not let a rising of Mohammedans if we did."³ Montagu let out a fatal secret here. He was afraid of a Moslem uprising. He tried to pacify their sentiments. But Montagu did not explain why this should be extended to the other religious communities.

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol. 1, p. 30

² S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* (Tuesday, December 11, 1917), p. 100

³ Ibid., (Thursday, November 29, 1917), p. 68

The Indian Christians are of several classes and communities.¹ Which Indian Christian, of which class, of which community is to be protected we do not know

This eternal error of cross-division is to be noted in their treatment of the Depressed Classes. They, too, belong to several communities. Their protection was designed to be secured by nomination. The Government of India did not take into account so moderate a picture as that given of these classes by the Statutory Commission.² Does the Government of India believe that the religious, economic, and social disabilities of these classes will be removed by nomination of members representing these classes to councils where no one has power?³ Does the Government of India believe that the educated members of this class, very few in number, truly represent this class? Ambedkar represents the vocal section of these classes, but not the mass of these classes.⁴

In connection with Sikhs both Montagu and Chelmsford

¹ As with other communities the illiterate masses have no knowledge of politics, but the educated and semi-educated classes of the community have begun to interest themselves definitely in the political questions confronting the country. Probably the Liberal or Moderate Party represents the views of the bulk of the leading Christians who interest themselves in politics, but in proportion to their numbers they have produced a not unworthy body of men of independent judgment who are more than the echoes of a party. The younger generation of the educated Christians is on the whole strongly nationalist; the views of Christian students, for instance, are not markedly different from those of other students of their age." Rev. William Paton, "The Indian Christians" (in *Political India*), edited by Sir John Cumming 1932 p. 154.

² Indian Statutory Commission, vol. I pp. 37-41.

³ Cf. Ambedkar: "The system of nomination has produced in the case of the depressed classes, results which we all say are abominable. The system has been abused in a manner in which it was never expected that it would be abused, and it has never given the depressed classes the real and independent representation which they must have as their safeguard. Under no circumstances therefore will the depressed classes accept representation by nomination." Indian Round Table Conference, Proceedings of Sub-Committees III p. 109 (1931).

⁴ Cf. S. C. Bose *The Indian Struggle* p. 41. "In 1930 and after Ambedkar has had leadership thrust upon him by a benign British Government because his services were necessary to embarrass the nationalist leaders."

Moonje. My contention is that I represent also the depressed classes, and my friend Mr. Gavi who is sitting by my side, is a representative of the depressed classes on the deputation of Hindu Sabha, and it has never been proved whether Ambedkar represents the majority or whether Mr. Gavi

stated correctly that they are a distinct people. But they failed to see that they are more than that. They reduced this small nationality to a mere religious community.¹ In the Sikh, religion and nationality are identical. The Maharattas, too, were treated by the joint authors as though they were a religious community.

The need for special representation of Europeans was not explained. Outside the Government official bloc with its European employees, the Europeans that live in India are mostly industrialists and missionaries. The representation of European industrial and commercial classes is intended as a counterpoise to the growing Indian industrial classes who have joined the National Congress.

Both Montagu and Chelmsford confirmed the policy of Morley and Minto. Their policy was no other than a continuation of the previous "counterpoise policy." The recognition of the claims of the other so-called minority communities means the recognition of the just-emerging professional classes in these communities, Sikhs, Maharattas, non-Brahmins, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, and Depressed Classes. The professional classes of the so-called communities naturally look to the Government for a helping hand.

Take for instance the Anglo-Indians. They are mostly employed on the railways, in the telegraph, postal, police, and junior magisterial services. They are also found in the customs, survey, and medical departments. With the movement of Indianization, the Anglo-Indian suffered loss of employment in these services. These are the causes of his discontent.² Lieutenant-Colonel Gidney said at the Round Table Conference, "Our demands can be reduced to two main points. our employment in the Government services, our education, . . . and

represents the majority of the depressed classes." Ambedkar denied this position. Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Minutes of Evidence, vol. 11 C, 1934, p. 1420.

¹ The political importance or strength—a phrase which the Government of India insists upon and uses it often—of this community lies in this. This community contributed no less than 80,000 men to serve in the Great War. When this is remembered along with their loyalty in 1857, we can explain this patronage of Sikhs.

See Indian Statutory Commission, vol. 1, p. 31.

² Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 44-45.

it is on these two essentials that I seek protection and safeguards." He also affirmed their 'unexpurgable loyalty to the crown of England'"

The Government in recognizing these claims of this community did not forget the role played by the Anglo-Indian in the Mutiny. All the services in which they are at present employed are strategic services. "Loyalty and devotion to duty are as essential to the external security of India as in the fighting forces." Herein lies the political importance of the community. It is used as a counterpoise against the rest of the communities. Secondly, their position in the strategic services is so important that they have to purchase their continued loyalty by guaranteeing security of employment. It is considerations of this kind that led the Government to recognize the claims of the Anglo-Indians for special representation.

The struggle between these classes depends upon the extent of their relative backwardness of one to the other. The greater the disparity between the professional classes of these religious communities, the greater is the struggle, and the greater is the demand for "protection"—another word for jobs. In the extension of this principle of communal representation to these communities the Government has a twofold object. On one hand it satisfied the ambitions, though in a meagre manner, of these rising professional classes. On the other, it uses them as adequate counterpoise to the other advanced professional classes who dominate the Congress and the League. By recognizing the claims of the non-Brahmins they undermined the power of the Brahmin professional class in Madras. By recognizing the claims of the Sikhs, they opposed them to the Hindu and Moslem professional classes in Punjab who had a prior start in the securing of official loaves and fishes. When once this situation is created, it will have its own history and its own laws of causation. No one doubts that the present communal tension is due to the struggle for political power and for the opportunities which political power confers,¹ and communal

¹ Indian Round Table Conference Proceedings of Sub-Committee III 1931 pp 91-93

Indian Statutory Commission, vol. I, p. 30

H. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* p. 114 (Monday December 17 1917)
 "Now the English hate the Indians, the Indians hate the English, and this,

tension means the struggle between the various unequal professional classes of various communities irrespective of creed and caste. Everything in India is a minority except the Hindu. The Moslems, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Parsis, the Anglo-Indians, the British community, the British merchants in India, and, above all, the Depressed Classes are minorities. Even labour, which is the numerical majority, is a "minority," and women, too, are a "minority." Very soon the Government will extend it to "eunuchs and concubines."

Like Morley, Montagu lost his opportunity. Like Morley, Montagu talked nobly, wrote eloquently, but acted poorly. Both were Liberals. Both succumbed to party dictates. Both squandered their parts at the India Office.

new violent opposition of the Brahmanas to the non-Brahmanas has become the guiding principle of the place. Of course the causes of this are partly Mrs. Besant and partly the fact *that there is no government*. "I cannot understand why Mrs. Besant should be blamed, unless she is to be blamed for her role in the Home Rule agitation."

Class Struggles¹

WE reach the next milestone in the history of communal representation through a background of gigantic class struggles. The period of 1919-1938 is one of increasing class struggles between the various classes of the Indian National Congress, between the British and Indian industrialists, between the various strata of the industrialist classes themselves, English and Indian, between the workers, peasants, and the Congress—and all against the Government. Every struggle between the classes developed ultimately into a struggle against the Government.

The Akali movement is one example. The Akalis are a militant puritan sect of the Sikhs. They wanted to reform the administration of the Sikh shrines. These shrines are mostly rich and were administered by a set of Mohants (abbots), who lived a disreputable life at public expense, although they were required to act merely as trustees, living an ascetic and abstemious life. The urban politically educated classes organized the Akalis. They wanted to dispossess these abbots and bring the shrines under the administration of popular committees. The Government rallied to the support of the abbots. The Akalis resented it. Thus the movement guided by the urban educated classes turned itself into a movement against the Government.

The Government reached the limit of its concessions. The educated and commercial classes could not get any more concessions. Naturally within the classes competition developed and ran on national lines with masked ideologies. It fully exploited religion to cover up its designs. The struggle of these classes was further intensified by the general economic crisis.

¹ The purpose of this chapter is not to describe the complete history of class struggles during this period, but only those that have a bearing on the communal question, those which the British policy of counterpoise utilized and those that showed middle-class national demands.

that followed the war. The period of 1920-1921 was the worst period of unrest according to the Government of India. It coincided with the occurrence of intensive agitation by the Congress and the working masses. Strikes had been a concomitant of the Indian industry. The economic situation after the war gave rise to the problem of the employer and worker, of the Indian and British industrial classes, of middle-class unemployment, and of pauperization of the peasantry. These are fully reflected in the class struggles of the period.

I. THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE CONGRESS

We now begin with the struggles within the Congress. In 1918 the Congress rejected the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. The moderates seceded from the Congress and started the All-India Liberal Federation, while in 1907 it had been the extremists who seceded from the Congress. These were the men that Montagu rallied to his cause. They were the theoretical heavyweights of "constitutionalism." They presented what one writer calls a penny-plain version of the twopenny, highly-coloured Congress creed. They accepted office. Sapru became a member of the Executive Council of Viceroy. Chintamani became the Minister of Education in the United Provinces. Surendranath, the once "Sir Surrender Not," surrendered. He accepted office as a minister in the Bengal Government and was knighted. The "trumpet voice of India" became "His Majesty's voice" in Bengal. Very soon they became the critics of the Government. At this stage Montagu resigned. The moderates found it difficult to co-operate with the Government and resigned. Sapru resigned in April 1922, Chintamani in May 1923. There is no room in India for the moderates as they at present appear. Today their services lie in advocating "conference methods," "moderation with wisdom," and "wisdom with moderation."

In 1919 the Congress passed a resolution in favour of working the new constitution. Gandhi was largely responsible for this decision.¹ This was opposed by C. R. Das, B. C. Pal, and Chakravarti, all from Bengal. Bengal led the opposition to

¹ M. K. Gandhi in *Young India*, December 31, 1919

Gandhi. This opposition later crystallized in the formation of the Swarajya Party

On March 18, 1919, the Rowlatt Act was passed conferring permanently on the Government of India extraordinary powers for the arrest of individuals and their imprisonment without trial. This was in line with British policy. Repression and concession went hand in hand. The Amritsar tragedy was the signal for the birth of the non-co-operation movement. This was in turn the signal for the differentiation of classes within the Congress fold.

Swarajist Opposition

The non-co-operation movement was vigorously challenged by several sections of the Congress. The opposition came from Bengal in two forms, in the form of the Swarajya Party, and in the form of renewed activities of the anarchists.

B. C. Pal, analysing the Gandhi mind, said 'The Gandhi movement has never been really a freedom movement. From the very beginning it has been a reversion to the old autocracies of Hindu and Moslem India. The prevailing faith in the supernatural has contributed more than anything else to create a demi-god of the Mahatma in our social and political life.

This has been the general mentality that has prevailed in our politics and public life ever since Mr. Gandhi captured the Congress. In the next place, Mr. Gandhi has not been helped to his unique influence in the country by merely the medieval Indian mind, but also by the more practical support that has come to him from the multi-millionaires and the mill-masters of his own province who have not been slow to recognize in him a very efficient instrument for advancing their own economic and financial interests. They have exploited him as he himself has, perhaps unconsciously, exploited them. In the coming Gandhi Raj, if the Gandhi movement succeeds, we shall have no democracy, but an autocracy of the oriental type dominated by priestly influences, and worked especially for the benefit of profiteering banias.¹

¹ B. C. Pal, *The Gandhi Mind* quoted in Tyson op cit. pp 51-52. For the religious influence of Gandhi see S. C. Bose *The Indian Struggle* pp 133-35.

M. K. Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, fourth edition (Natesan, Madras),

Pal was the best nationalist negative thinker, as Aurobindo is the best religious. His negative protest was formulated in the positive, though inadequately, by Das in the formation of the Swarajya Party.

Das was the next great Indian leader after Tilak. Both were born fighters. Both brought the movement to the masses. Both broke from academic traditions and rooted the movement in the historical cultural traditions of Maharashtra and Bengal.

Aurobindo Ghose wrote: "The Congress movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character, and methods confined to the English educated few, founded on the political rights and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals; but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past, and to restore continuity to the political life of the nation." Tilak was the first to bring the masses into the actual field of practical politics. He thus aroused a great and powerful political awakening in India by his ability to unite all classes of men, particularly the masses behind him.¹

Das was another great mass leader after Tilak. In his presidential address delivered at the Bengal Provincial Conference, Calcutta, April 1917, he said: "Our chiefest danger is this, that we have become largely and unnecessarily Anglicized in our education, culture, and social practices . . . we never look to our country, never think of Bengal or the Bengalees, of our past national history or our present material condition. Hence our political agitation is unreal and unsubstantial . . . divorced from all intimate touch with the soul of our people." "I have said that our political agitation is a lifeless and soulless farce . . . a thing without reality and truth. No doubt we shall have to build it up into truth, but to do that we shall have to base it upon the life of Bengal, and hence it is that I propose in this

p. 342 "I hate legislative interference in any department of life. At best it is the lesser evil. But I would tolerate, welcome, indeed plead for a stiff protective duty upon foreign goods."

¹ Aurobindo Ghose, "An Appreciation of B. G. Tilak" (in B. G. Tilak, *Writings and Speeches*, third edition, Madras, 1922), pp. 6-7.

great assembly to speak about my land, my home, the Banga-Bhumi of ours"¹

While Tilak fostered the Maharashtra forms of struggle against imperialism, Das fostered those of Bengal. In Tilak and Das we see the national forms of struggle against imperialism

It was Das who led the Swarajist revolt. It was he who dethroned Gandhi and put him in defence of his views. It was he who forced Gandhi to ally himself with the Khalifatists as a counterpoise against the Swarajists.

The Swarajist revolt coincided with the growth and the emergence of the lower middle-class intelligentsia in Bengal and Gujerat. The cleavage between Das and Gandhi is an unconscious expression of the struggle of these classes cast in national forms. Politically it was cast in the form of a struggle between action and inaction, between violence and non-violence and constitutionalism. Economically it is a struggle between the money and millocracy on one hand, and the middle classes on the other. This itself was a class struggle against the mill-owners of Gujerat, Bombay, and Ahmedabad, a protest of the middle class of Bengal against the Gujerati mill-owners, in the name of India.

Nevertheless, the Swarajya revolt represented an important phase in the internal struggles of the Congress. The official Congress under the leadership of Gandhi stood as a block of "no changers". It is not without significance that this bloc should consist of money-changers of Gujerat, Ahmedabad, and Bombay. Feelings between the two parties became exceedingly bitter. The Swarajists gained prestige gradually. With the death of C. R. Das the party collapsed.

Responsivist Opposition

Another opposition to the Congress came in the form of the Responsivist Party, headed by Jayakar and Kelkar in 1925. They supported the Swarajya Party at first, but they later differed on two main points. They advocated discriminate opposition as opposed to the Swarajist policy of indiscriminate

¹ R. and B. K. Sen, C. R. Das vol. I—*Life and Speeches* English version, pp. 8-9, 10.

opposition to the Government in the legislatures. They did not approve of what they called the pro-Moslem attitude of the Swarajya Party or of the Indian National Congress. They leaned more and more towards the policies of the Hindu Maha Sabha.

Jayakar and Kelkar hail from Maharashtra, Gandhi and Patel from Gujarat. The cleavage between the Congress of Gandhi and Patel, and the Responsivist Party of Jayakar and Kelkar is the cleavage between Ahmedabad and Bombay, between Maharashtra and Gujarat.¹ The opposition is between the professional classes of two distinct "nations" or historical communities. They agree as to their goal, but differ in methods. The Responsivists believe that they are following the traditions of Tilak, because they think that the idea of "responsive co-operation" was first propounded by Tilak in December 1919. But they followed Hindu Maha Sabha not Tilak. As used now the word "Responsivist" seemed to mean, take a job when you have the chance and make the best of it.²

¹ Edward Thompson, *A Letter from India*, pp 56-57 "Bombay is a city of mixed population, Gujarati, Parsi and Maratha elements predominating

One is that of the cleavage between Bombay and Ahmedabad. It is freely said that one main motive behind Congress agitation is to aggrandize Ahmedabad at Bombay's expense. There is a connected cleavage between the Gujarati and Maratha nations. For generations the Marathas plundered Gujarat, and the Gujaratis were a weak and subjugated people. Loyalty to Congress is intense among them, largely because in Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Patel, Gujarat, for the first time, has thrown up public figures of front rank importance. It is the Gujaratis who in Bombay supply the most inflammable group. There is the beginning of a Marathi-Gujarati divergence (conflict is still too strong a word) which sometimes shows itself queerly."

Ibid, p 44. On one occasion Jayakar spoke of Gandhi thus: "He is elusive, but there is no doubt that he is capable of the very highest forms of truth."

J. T. Gwyn, *Indian Politics—A Survey*, 1924, pp 40-41. "Indeed, a local reactionary explained to me the whole of the Mahratta Brahmin's lukewarmness towards Mr. Gandhi's movement in terms of Maharashtra's jealousy of this Gujarati interloper who has robbed Maharashtra of her traditional hegemony in Indian politics. I don't accept that explanation, but I agree that when a Mahratta takes the lead Maharashtra will be much less friendly and moderate than she is today. They (Mahrattas) disliked Mr. Gandhi's programme not because it was too extreme but because it was bad tactics. They wanted to go into the council and use it as a lever for extracting further concessions."

² J. Nehru, *Autobiography*, Bodley Head, London, 1936, p 132

Independent Opposition

The next opposition came from the Independent Party, headed by Lala Lajpat Rai¹ and Malavya in 1926. Srinivasa Iyengar joined the party later. These three come from different places, Lala and Malavya from northern India, and Iyengar from southern India. Patel and Mehta condemned the tactics of the Independents. Mehta openly called them the henchmen of the Government. The Moderates, the Independents, and the Responsivists do not differ much either in their aims or in their tactics. Influential leaders of all these parties believe that the time has at last come to attempt to form a grand national party by the union of Moderates, Independents, and Responsivists. The Independents played the same role in northern India as the Responsivists did in central and western India.

Within the Congress we see several shades of opinion reflecting the national psychology and class interests of various communities." Even in the object they were not united until now.

The opposition to the Congress at this stage showed subjectively veiled "national" forms. At the same time, objectively though to a limited extent, it showed the inadequacies of the Congress programme from the standpoint of the newly-emergent classes belonging to different "historical communities."

II. THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The struggles within the Trade Union Movement also reflected class interests. With 1920 dates the foundation of the All India Trade Union Congress. It marked the first recognition of the common interests of labour throughout the country. The early days of the labour movement were led by lawyers, journalists, clergymen, engineers, and politicians. The Madras Labour Union owed its initiative to the staff of 'New India.' The Indian Colliery Employees Association was founded by

¹ Lala Lajpat Rai after discussing the non-co-operation movement said: "What is needed now is the chalking out of a middle course. We are not ready to co-operate, we must do what is best practical and possible under the circumstances." Quoted in *India*, 1925-26 p. 26.

an engineer, Satakalı Bose. Even the office-bearers were frequently outsiders.¹ The workers in the early days were unable to find within their own ranks the necessary leaders. They looked up to the middle classes and the philanthropists, who sympathized with their wretched condition, to inspire and lead them. But the experience gained by the workers in the strike struggles enabled them to expose the outsiders who had been using them for their own political ends. They discovered the reformism and economism of their leaders. It was this growth of class consciousness among the workers, increasing class differentiation between the middle-class labour leaders on one hand, and the working-class representatives on the other that led to the split of the Trade Union Movement at Nagpur in 1929. This was inevitable under the conditions of the development of Trade Unionism in India. The further splits reflected the trends of the national movement, those of the Reformists, constitutionalists, and revolutionary elements. The lessons learnt during the last nine years of these internal struggles and splits paved the way for unity. It was at Nagpur again, in April 1938, that the Trade Union Movement achieved formal unity.

The struggles between the backward and advanced professional classes belonging to different faiths were reflected also in the Trade Union Movement. During this period of struggles we note the emergence of Moslem Trade Unions. Abdullah Yusuf Ali argued that force of circumstances compelled some of the Moslems to make their own Unions. Suhrawardy added that the general Trade Unions refused to put forward the demands of the Moslem members and look after their interests. It is for these reasons, they said, that the Moslems have formed separate Trade Unions.

As in the case of the general Trade Unions to which the Hindu middle classes flocked, so also Moslem middle classes flocked to the Moslem Trade Unions for their own ends. No

¹ Report Royal Commission on Labour, pp. 317, 324-25. Evidence, vol. viii, part I, p. 159.

See also B. F. Bradley, *Trade Unionism in India*, with an Introduction by T. A. Jackson. This pamphlet is part of the speech of Bradley, one of the thirty-one prisoners on trial at Meerut. It turns on the history of trade unionism and the trade union struggle in India.

wonder the demands of these Moslem Trade Unions were mainly demands for "Offices." Both Yusuf Ali and Suhrawardy asserted that questions of "services" were economic questions.¹ How could they be economic when they do not touch the interests of the members of the Unions, but only those of the middle-class leaders?

The formation of the Moslem Trade Unions was no other than the transplantation of communalism from the political to the industrial sphere. This question of rival Unions was discussed at Nagpur April 1938, but no satisfactory decision was reached.

The Government successfully utilized the struggles within the Trade Union Movement. They selected delegates from the moderate group as representatives at the International Labour Organization. One section of labour is used against another.

III. THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL CLASSES

The commercial classes, both British and Indian, also underwent a phase of acute struggles. With the coming of the British commercial classes came also their organizations. The struggle within the British commercial classes themselves is sometimes denied. We note such a cleavage between the British commercial classes of Bombay and Bengal. In Bombay they have found themselves so far threatened that they are ready to yield concessions to Indian demands. The Calcutta business men are opposed to this Bombay liberalism.² In Bombay the Britisher

¹ Joint Committee cited below p. 1542.

² Mr. Lyall admits "the pressure brought upon the British community in Bombay by the Congress." He says: "there has been a very great influence brought to bear by the Congress Party in regard to business of large British firms both in Bombay and Calcutta, very much less in Calcutta than in Bombay and that influence has not, in my opinion, been a creditable one, it has been really blackmail and oppression."

Mr. Foot also admitted: "there is a very strong contrary view held among business men in Calcutta, and I believe there has been a certain amount of repudiation in the Calcutta Press in regard to the attitude taken by that body. So far as Bombay is concerned, especially about 1928 and 1929, the pressure that was brought to bear upon them was almost unbelievable, and it did affect their businesses, so much so that

finds his place sometimes as the partner or the co-director of an Indian as an expert business consultant, or more frequently as an ordinary employee. His politics are very much mixed up with his daily bread and butter. He is a unit in indigenous Indian industry. The British business man in Bombay cannot afford to quarrel with his master, and the question of winning his daily livelihood must come before national and communal considerations. This accounts for his liberalism in Bombay. In Calcutta, the Britisher does not meet the Indian business man on anything like the same terms of intimacy, co-operation, and understanding that are to be found in Bombay. He controls the Bengal jute industry, the coal-fields of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and the tea-gardens of Assam, the Doons, and Sylhet. He is both the master and factor of British business enterprise there. This accounts for his opposition not only to the Indian business man, but also to his own class in Bombay. The British commercial classes are also opposed to those of Cawnpore, precisely for the same liberalism of Bombay. In the rupee ratio controversy the local Chamber of Commerce supported the Bombay Indian industrialists' claim for a one-and-fourpenny rupee. In so doing it stood alone among the European business organizations in the country. Manufacturing locally and for local consumption the British merchant in Cawnpore is bound more and more to acquiesce, and if necessary actively support the Indian nationalist programme of extreme protection and discriminatory measures against British and foreign imports.¹

many British firms had to accept a position which they resented most bitterly "

Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Minutes of Evidence, vol. 11 C, 1934, pp. 1744-45

Tyson, op. cit., p. 87. "Certain leading Englishmen in Bombay during the intensive political warfare (gave) their tacit support to certain parts of the Congress campaign. For instance the extraordinary (why extraordinary?) capitulation of Sir Joseph Kay, Managing Director of W. H. Brady and Co. Ltd., to the demands of the Bombay Congress Council. " Tyson thinks that this is bad politics and bad civics. Why?

¹ Tyson, op. cit., pp. 86-102

Ibid., p. 96. "The interests of the individuals of these two main groups are bound to assume a fundamental difference as time goes on, and I can see no possibility of reconciling them, at any rate in the economic sphere.

The economic sphere is admittedly of supreme importance and too much emphasis cannot be laid on the difficulties which lie ahead "

Ibid., pp. 101-2. "The British business men in Bombay and Calcutta

These differences are reflected in their political organization, the European Association.¹ This was first organized in 1883 in Calcutta by a merchant, Keswick, but it was not till 1920 that it began to grow rapidly. The date is not without significance. It came into prominence during the tidal wave of 1920-21, years of industrial crisis all over India, it came as a counterpart to the claims of the Indian National Congress. Sir Hubert Carr was the president of this association from 1922 to 1925. He was the chief representative of the interests of European commerce at the two Round Table Conferences of 1930, 1931. He was again a delegate in 1932. He does not deny the differences of opinion among the various sections of this association. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the European Association, appearing before the Simon Commission, expressed directly opposing views on the subject of the transfer of the portfolio of law and order to popular control. The Chamber expressed itself in favour of such a step. The Association was opposed to such a transfer.

At present there is a swing towards unity between these various organizations. Such a unity, temporarily overriding their respective economic interests, is inevitable in view of the development of the opposing forces towards unity.

IV THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE INDIAN COMMERCIAL CLASSES

The European non-official community took to political organization very much later than to commercial. The Indian

will continue to occupy fundamentally different places in the scheme of things. The planter in Assam and the merchant in Amritsar or Lahore or Delhi and the manufacturer in Cawnpore will find that economic factors operate against their attaining unanimity of opinion on all matters great and small."

¹ Sir Herbert Carr: "At the present moment as Mr. Lyall has said, there must always be differences of opinion. But those differences of opinion have been so far reduced that the Associated Chambers of Commerce have agreed with the European association in the memorandum submitted to the committee and have endorsed the evidence which has been put before them by those witnesses; so that, although there are differences of opinion, it may I think, fairly be taken that they are less today than they have been in the past." Joint Committee, op. cit. Minutes of Evidence vol. II C., 1934 p. 1745

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commercial classes took to organization mostly after the war, as a safeguarding counterpart to the Europeans. In recent years they have taken a large and growing part in the commercial life of the country. The extent of their participation varies greatly in different parts of India. Bombay has led the way in the industrial and commercial regeneration of the country. Arising from these circumstances we find certain associations such as the Bombay Merchants' Chamber and Bureau, of which the membership is exclusively Indian.

In 1913 a new movement was started by F. C. Ibrahim, a leading mill-owner of Bombay. It aimed at effecting great improvement in strengthening Indian commercial organization. Ibrahim's original idea was for the formation of an Indian commercial congress. The proposal was met with approval throughout India. The scheme was delayed by the war, but afterwards received an impetus from the same cause. The first congress was held in 1915. It was attended by several delegates from all parts of India. D. E. Wacha, president of the Bombay Indian Merchants' Chamber, presided as chairman of the reception committee. F. Currimbhoy was elected as the first president. The congress resolved upon the establishment of an association, Indian Chamber of Commerce. It elected a provincial committee empowered to take the necessary steps to get the association registered, to enrol members, and carry on work.

This organization languished for lack of support for some years, until a number of merchants specially interested in currency and exchange questions revived it in 1926 at Delhi and in 1927 at Calcutta, the initiative in these new activities hailing, like the first movement, from Bombay.

The Commercial Congress held in Calcutta on December 31, 1926, and January 1, 1927, decided upon the formation of a federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce. Its object was to promote Indian business in matters of inland and foreign trade, transport, industry and manufacture, finance, and all other economic subjects.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce was established in November 1925 to promote and protect the trade, commerce, and industries in or with which Indians are engaged or concerned. Merchants, bankers, shipowners, representatives of

commercial, transport, or insurance companies, brokers and persons engaged in or connected with art, science, or literature who are Indians are eligible for election as members of the chamber¹

The chamber has representatives on the Calcutta Port Commission, Bengal Nagpur Railway Advisory Committee, Railway Rates Advisory Committee, Calcutta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Bengal Conciliation Panel.

The Indian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce also arose during this period. It has on its roll thirty six commercial bodies as organization members, and nineteen commercial firms as associate members. Its object is to secure harmony of action on all international questions affecting finance, industry, and commerce.

The Indian Merchants Chamber was established in the year 1907. Its object was to encourage friendly feeling and unanimity on all subjects that relate directly and indirectly to the interests of the Indian business community. It has several important bodies affiliated to it. Under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms the chamber has the right of electing one representative on the Indian Legislative Assembly and one on the Bombay Port Trust, one representative on the Bombay Municipal Corporation and one on the Improvement Committee.

The Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce was started in September 1927 with the object of establishing friendly relations among merchants and factory owners of Maharashtra, safeguarding their interests against measures likely to affect them adversely, collecting financial, industrial, and trade statistics, and disseminating information thereon amongst members of the Chamber. Membership is confined to merchants and factory owners belonging to the city of Bombay, Bombay Suburban District, Poona, Sholapur, Satara, Rutnagiri, and Kolaba.

¹ The Calcutta Rice Merchants Association, East Indian Jute Association, Exchange and Bullion Brokers Association, Indian Steel Agents Association, Calcutta Karna Association, Gunny Trades Association and Bengal Jute Dealers Association are affiliated with this chamber.

The Southern India Chamber of Commerce has its registered office at Madras. Its object is the promotion of trade in the Madras Presidency, and protecting the interests of members. It has its representatives in the Madras Port Trust, Madras Legislative Council, Madras Corporation, and in various local boards and bodies

The Government of India termed these organizations "interests," and it is from these that they have nominated non-official representatives to the councils. But this did not eliminate their competition with the British commercial classes. On the contrary, these organizations have been the fertile source of the policy of counterpoise by the Government.

V. THE STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE INDIAN AND BRITISH COMMERCIAL CLASSES

These Indian commercial organizations pursued the politics of opposition. Most of them came into existence in opposition to British Chambers of Commerce after the war. Where both are traders their interests are not identical. Where both are employers their interests are identical, as shown in the mill-owners' association of Bombay.

One example of the struggle of interests between these classes was the resentment of the Indian commercial classes against the British monopoly of coastal shipping. The debates on the Indian Coastal Shipping Bill in the Legislative Assembly showed the divergent character of British and Indian interests. According to Mr. Haji, who introduced the "Reservation of the Coastal Traffic of India Bill," the position of the foreigners engaged in the coastal trade of India was that of usurpers who had prevented Indians from getting any foothold in the shipping business. The coastal trade of the country was controlled by a monopoly which had inflicted great economic injury on India. He was anxious to end that monopoly. At that time there was only one Indian concern, the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, under the guidance of W. Hirachand. He has been a consistent supporter of the Congress. He was not in favour of equal rights for European and Indian commerce under the new Constitution. His attitude was the same as that of the majority

of the Indian commercial opinion. The talk of equality of commercial rights between Indian and European was preposterous to him. Such a clause, he said, must not be allowed to find a place in the Constitution.¹

Sir P. C. Ray, a distinguished scientist, founder and chairman of the Bengal Chemical Works, Ltd., wrote

"What the British in this country are enjoying and what they want in a new constitution is not equality of rights, but special prerogatives as a ruling race, continuance of the preferential treatment they have received from a Government with which they have kinship, and the perpetuation of existing inequalities, unless all these prerogatives, privileges, and unfair conditions are ceded, Indians will have no chance to build up their economic future."²

Lala Sri Ram, in his presidential address to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in 1931, said

"If the British interests insist on unreasonable safeguards and guarantees in the future constitution of the country, patriotic Indians are bound to fight shy of them and make every effort to resort to other countries for the necessary material and expert advice."³

The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, whilst acknowledging that the International Conference on the treatment of foreigners desired that existing trading rights of foreigners should be respected, added that 'it must be remembered that this principle is applicable only to rights acquired under autonomous nations.' It also stated that in their opinion the right of trading may be enjoyed by every one resident in India, but the right of developing her key industries, the right of operating utility services and similar rights, would be reserved for nationals.

The Indian Merchants Chamber in Bombay is the most powerful organization in India. Its membership includes all those wealthy Bombay merchants who contribute to the Congress fund. In a statement issued to the newspapers on February 27, 1931, it said

Liberty February 13 1931 (quoted in Tyson, op cit. p 54)

Statesman, Calcutta, February 2, 1931 (quoted in Tyson, op cit., p. 55)

³ Tyson, op cit., p 57

“ . . . in regard to specific guarantees regarding equality of treatment to commercial and industrial non-Indian interests in India, and regarding prohibition against legislation giving special advantage of facilities to Indian industry, the committee is emphatically of the opinion that such guarantees cannot be given without permanently barring the industrial and commercial development of the country ”¹

In its annual report of 1930 the Calcutta Indian Chamber of Commerce recommended that “no foreign banks should be allowed to carry on ordinary banking business in the country unless they are registered in India with a rupee capital, and have a majority of Indians on their directorates ”²

In matters of insurance, municipal buildings, public markets, and other civic concerns have in recent years been insured with Indian companies. This expression of class interest was regarded as a discrimination against the British commercial companies by the Government and the British companies themselves.

It is not possible here to give an exhaustive sketch of these struggles.

The Government utilized these organizations and their struggles for its own ends. By securing representation of these “interests” in the Assembly and Councils the Government skilfully perfected their policy of counterpoise. When once the principle of representation of interests came into existence, pseudo organizations of interests were easily forthcoming. The Bengal Mahajan Sabha, a purely money-lenders’ organization, felt aggrieved because it had not as many seats assigned to it as the Bengal Marwari Association and the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, who are its rivals. This organization wanted protection. This plea of

¹ Tyson, *op cit*, p. 60

² *Ibid*, p. 61

Cf. also the statement made by Sen Gupta: “We are not prepared to admit British citizens who are not natural born Indians to the rights and privileges of Indian citizenship. They will be treated as aliens and excluded from certain political and economic rights meant for citizens. Only those British people who fulfil the conditions of nationality or satisfy the test laid down by an immigration law that may be passed will have no cause for fear on the score of commercial discrimination . . .” Quoted in Tyson, *op cit*, p. 97.

protection was an expression of protest against the other rival organizations¹

In addition to this struggle between various commercial classes we note the struggle between the Indian industrial and commercial classes and the British policy in India. These classes attacked the fiscal and currency policies of the Government. The abolition of the excise duty in 1925 was one of the few concessions given to these classes. It was a sop to the Indian textile interests²

The Moslem commercial classes, too, took to the organization of chambers of commerce. They argue that although theoretically the British chambers of commerce are open to the Indians, yet it has been found necessary for the Hindus to organize themselves into separate chambers. Similarly they feel the same need. They agree theoretically that it is better to work together with the Hindus in matters of organizing chambers of commerce, but they say they have to take into account the feelings of their co-religionists.³ The Muslim League and the Muslim Conference both advocate Moslem chambers of commerce wherever existing as separate electoral units⁴ The rivalry between the Moslem and Hindu professional classes extended to the commercial classes as well during this period⁵

These commercial classes, while struggling against the

¹ Joint Committee, op cit. Minutes of Evidence, vol. II C. 1934 pp 2203-6

V Basak, *Some Urgent Problems of the Labour Movement in India* (Workers Library Publishers, New York), p 7 "The boycott movement of 1907 the war the post war revolutionary upsurge of the boycott of 1919-22, the further rise of the movement and the boycott of 1930-31 all hastened the development of Indian capitalism. Indian capitalism, taking advantage of the struggle of the masses, secured certain concessions from imperialism and captured certain positions"

H S Suhrawardy Joint Committee, op cit., Minutes of Evidence, vol. II C. p 1541

⁴ Memorandum 67 on behalf of the All India Muslim Conference and the All India Muslim League in *ibid.*, p 1477

Resolution of the All India Muslim Conference, January 1 1929 *ibid.* p 1480

"There is not enough material for an adequate sketch of the rise and growth of Moslem commercial and industrialist classes. Mussalmans control some mills in Bombay but few if any elsewhere." Royal Commission on Labour p 7

British, at the same time seek the aid of the British Government in connection with dumping. The Japanese, Dutch, and Belgian manufacturers at home and in the colonies are inundating India with cheap goods, sugar, and paper. The Indian manufacturers suffer thereby. They therefore appeal to the British for help. The British Government does not delay in coming to their aid. It is prepared to introduce high tariffs on Japanese, Dutch, Belgian, and other countries' commodities, but not on British goods. This need for protection against foreign competition drives these classes to come to terms with the British, who are also their enemies. The alignment of class forces is contradictory. It is one of opposition and collaboration.

VI THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE INDIAN STATES

When we come to the Indian States we notice the same phenomenon. The Butler Committee classified these States into three categories.¹ There is always jealousy between these various groups with reference to their rank and the number of salutes they receive.² The Chamber of Princes is another institution which has caused dissensions among the princes. Many of them deplore the non-representative character of the Chamber. The views of the Chamber can be said to represent the views of the large States. Out of 118 full power or salute States, 108 joined the Chamber. These jealousies now and then express themselves in politics. The Maharaja of Nabha was deposed because of his avowed sympathy with the nationalist aims. In the days of the Mutiny the Nabha was a faithful ally. His deposition was questioned by the Congress leaders. This showed a possibility of alliance between the discontented

¹ Indian States Inquiry Committee, Cmd 3302, 1929, paras 10-11. See for the comments on this classification, G. N. Singh, *Indian States and British India: Their Future Relations* (Benares, pp. 7-9). This writer thinks that it would be better to classify them into big and small States.

² Cf. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer, *Indian Constitutional Problems*, 1928, p. 209. "The princes are jealous of their status and are afraid of being treated as equals among themselves, some of them are not prepared to meet each other in the Chamber on terms of apparent equality, nor are they prepared to concede the principle of a decision by a majority. They are afraid of the levelling tendency of any organization of this sort and object to the process of levelling up as much as to that of levelling down."

princes and the Indian middle classes. The Congress squandered these possibilities, and did not continue the question for long. Just as the Chamber of Princes strengthened the inner antagonisms between the various princes, the announcement of a federation scheme for India also brought forth their divergent interests.

It became a bone of contention differentiating the princes into progressives and reactionaries. Bhopal, Bikaner, Mysore, Baroda, and others formed the progressive bloc. The reactionary bloc was led by Patiala. This struggle between these two groups was also reflected in the struggle for the chancellorship of the Princes Chamber. Bhopal had replaced Patiala. The Simla clique did not like this. The struggle between Bhopal and Patiala resulted in a compromise, which brought Jamnagar as the chancellor. Very soon Jamnagar learnt his bitter lessons. In the Chamber he openly condemned those who used the Indian princes as mere pawns for thwarting the national demands. He was effectively silenced by Lord Willingdon for this late candid outburst. "Just as efforts were successfully made to embroil Moslems with the Hindus, the princes with shady reputations were set against the progressive group amongst their own order"¹

Many of the princes dread the Political Department. They live in abject terror of it. Any moment they could be deposed if they are not on good terms with it. They believed they could defeat the Political Department and set at naught its influence by consenting to accept federation. But they found that it is only a fake, or at the most a reactionary amalgam of heterogeneous elements. They therefore became very reluctant to support it. Meanwhile official propaganda in India got busy in setting one prince against another, in weakening the Chamber of Princes by encouraging dissensions in it and in making personal Viceregal appeals to the princes. Utilizing these rivalries, amidst much wire pulling and cajolery, with an Instrument of Accession the Bill embodying the Federation was passed.

The Government is not without its interests in inaugurating the scheme of federation. It wanted to carry on the traditions

¹ Cavachar *Non-violent Non-co-operation*, pp. 254-55

of British policy since Lytton, and bring the princes into it as a counterpoise to the politically-minded middle classes, or, as it is moderately put, the presence of the Indian princes in the Constitution would be viewed by the British Government as constituting the most essential safeguard¹ A B Keith, in a letter to Varadachariar, writes "It declines to impose any obligation on the part of the states to move towards representative or responsible government . since such a movement might destroy the conservative character of the state representation"² The States are brought into the Federation to maintain the conservative character and not to destroy it The Federation is the legal fulfilment of the dream of the old counterpoisers

It was Sir John Malcolm who said that the permanent existence of the British in India depended upon "keeping up a number of native states without political power, but as *royal instruments*"³ The creation of these States was designed as a territorial counterpoise against the rest of India In addition to keeping up these States, utilizing their rivalries to its advantage, the Government has brought them into the Federation for a further policy of counterpoise

VII THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL CLASSES

Of late a milder word than counterpoise has crept into Indian political literature It is "weightage" It is a formula by which the Government approximates the ratio between communities,

¹ J Wedgwood "These princes were brought into the federation not as the Simon Commission intended as fellow self-governing units, they were brought in to make the centre *conservative* and *pro-English*" Joint Committee, op cit, Minutes of Evidence, vol II A, p 126 *Manchester Guardian*, November 28, 1930 "The representation of princes in the All-India Federation will liquidate this conflict (between Britain and India) not because the Indian princes will send to the All-India Federal Parliament representatives who will enjoy more confidence in our country than the representatives of British India, but because they will introduce into the Parliament an element of racial, religious and political equilibrium"

² N D Varadachariar, *Indian States in the Federation*, 1936, pp 142-43

³ Quoted in C L Tupper, *Our Indian Protectorate*, Longmans, London, 1893, p 109

classes, and interests to an equilibrium, based on its own ideas of "political importance"¹ This formula has, to a certain extent, contributed to the rise and growth of Hindu Maha Sabha. To another extent this growth was due to the social economy of the country The Hindu Maha Sabha is the result of the counterpoising policy pursued by the Government in creating special communal electorates as a set-off against the Hindu classes It arose essentially as a religious and social organization in order to bring about religious and social reform of the Hindus It took to politics in order to protest against attacks and assaillments made on the rights and privileges of the Hindus. Moonje claims that it represents all Hindus, Buddhists, and the Depressed Classes² The Sabha included the Depressed Classes in its ranks in order to strengthen its position. This was the result of criticism levelled against Hindu orthodoxy Under its auspices, a purification movement was started which made it possible for non Hindus to become Hindus. Swami Shraddhananda was the leader of this movement. He was murdered by a Moslem. The politics of this Sabha are a medley of contradictions "Under cover of seeming nationalism the Maha Sabha not only hides the rankest and narrowest communalism, but also desires to preserve the vested interests of a group of big Hindu landlords and the

¹ Cf Ambedkar this system (of weightage) has been abused. I am not against the principle of weightage I do not accept the principle that in all circumstances every minority must be confined to its population ratio A minority may be so small that its population ratio may give a representation which may be wholly inadequate for the purpose of its protection. It may be a representation which may be of no consequence at all If therefore you want to protect a minority adequately and really then in certain circumstances the principle of weightage must be subject to some uniform and intelligible principle. In our opinion weightage is to be conceded because a minority is weak, either in numbers, or because its social standing is low or its educational standing is backward as compared with others, or because its economic strength is not sufficient to place it on a fighting par with other communities But I cannot understand for instance how weightage can be allowed on the ground of political importance, or loyalty or services rendered either to the Empire or to the British Government. I think if we adopt that principle, we shall land ourselves in very difficult circumstances from which it will be difficult to extricate ourselves" Indian Round Table Conference, Proceedings of Sub-Committees Part II Sub-Committee III 1931 p 110

² Moonje, Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform Minutes of Evidence, vol. II C. 1934, pp 1420-21

princes”¹ Its contribution lies in its opposition to communal representation, but it recognized reservations within joint electorates²

To counter the claims of the Sabha, the Moslems organized “Tanzeem” and “Tabligh,” which aim at making the Moslems into a strong and virile community These movements (Hindu and Moslem) came into prominence during the years of acute economic crisis in India. They came when the struggles between the various classes were getting more and more prominent. Both the movements contain backward middle classes, strongly imbued with orthodoxy Both pursue counterpoising policies among themselves The Tanzeem sometimes allied with the Muslim League, sometimes opposed it The Sabha sometimes allied with the Congress, sometimes opposed it. During the year 1925 it became identical with the Responsivists

Both these movements are strong in upper India. The Tanzeem movement has no influence at all in Bengal in spite of the predominance of Moslems The Congress is the only political body that has influence there. Since the Sabha includes Depressed Classes in its ranks the movement is gaining ground in the other provinces where the problem of the Depressed Classes exists³

In opposition to the Hindu Maha Sabha, there is the All-India Varnashram Swarajya Sangha This body is in fact the right wing of the Sabha Acharya, one of the leaders of this Sangha, observes that it represents the orthodox Hindus, and

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Recent Essays and Writings*, Kitabistan, Allahbad, 1934, p 43

² Memorandum 57 (The All-India) Hindu Maha Sabha Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Minutes of Evidence, vol 11 C, 1934, pp 1362-65

³ Joint Committee, op cit, Minutes of Evidence, vol 11 C, 1934, p 1529
Ibid, p 1435 Moonje asserts that the Sabha has branches all over the provinces Ibid, p 1445 It is the only organized body next to the Congress in India It is a communal body in so far as it is composed only of Hindus It is also essentially a national body, so far as the political principles which it preaches and insists on for the Constitution of India are concerned Ibid, p 1466 It represents all sections orthodox and non-orthodox, reformers, Arya Samajists, Jains and Buddhists He does not say that it represents the big landlords or the rich banker class See Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, John Lane, London, 1936, p 577

not the heterodox Hindus, while the Hindu Maha Sabha represents the heterodox. He claims that the members of the Sangha are not denationalized.¹ They claim they are the Hindu purists. The Sangha came into existence in 1929. It is opposed to communal representation, and to any kind of legislative interference in matters of religion.² It is opposed to the Poona Pact.³ Sen declared before the Joint Committee that he had no knowledge of this body.⁴ Reddi declared that this was a reactionary body,⁵ and did not represent the feelings of the people. This is another of those mushroom growths that abound in India on the eve of reforms.

It is idle to regard these organizations as purely religious.⁶ For good or evil, religion is there. As long as it is there, it is used for the furtherance of political ambitions. It supplies the wished for ideology necessary for such backward classes, as a theoretical expression of their interests.

VIII. THE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS, ETC.

We also note various organizations arising for the protection of women's interests. The All-India Muslim Women's Confer-

¹ Acharya, Joint Committee, op cit., Minutes of Evidence, vol. II C., 1934 p. 1574.

Memorandum 65 on behalf of the All India Varnashram Swaraja Sangha, by M. K. Acharya in Joint Committee op cit., Minutes of Evidence, vol. II C., 1934, pp. 1558-59.

See also Memorandum 68 by J. Bannerje on behalf of the Bengal Branch of the Sangha. Ibid., op cit., pp. 1563-64.

² Memorandum 68, op cit., pp. 1564-65. The Poona Pact is an agreement regarding communal representation between certain leaders of the Depressed Classes and the followers of Gandhi. The Sangha claims, "The orthodox Hindus as a body were no parties to the Pact. Their opinion was never asked and never taken." They therefore reject it.

⁴ Joint Committee, op cit., p. 1616.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1621.

Cf. statement of the Hindu Maha Sabha on the constitutional problem. "The unrest in India is entirely political. Other causes, such as the economic depression, Hindu-Muslim tension, have merely added to the miseries arising from the political struggle. They believe that with the attainment of their freedom will disappear the Hindu-Muslim tension." Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Minutes of Evidence vol. II C., 1934, p. 1368. This statement though badly formulated, is significant, especially coming from the Sabha.

ence came into existence during this period¹ The Women's Indian Association was founded in 1917, with its headquarters in Madras, with twenty-four centres, seventy-two branches distributed throughout India. The National Council of Women in India was founded in 1925 It has six centres in different provinces, with six branches and seventy-seven affiliated societies The All-India Women's Conference was founded in 1925 These last three associations in their memoranda to the Joint Committee² declared opposition to communal representation They demanded equality between sexes In opposition to this, the communalist Moslems desired that women vote in the separate communal electorates of the communities to which they belonged³ This was stated on behalf of Moslem women alone Miss Rathbone told the committee that she was not aware of any Sikh association, or any Indian Christian association, claiming that women's seats should be held on communal principles⁴

Above all, the struggle between the money-lender and the peasants,⁵ the veiled alliance between the money-lender and the

¹ Joint Committee, op cit, Minutes of Evidence, vol II C, 1934, p 1497.

² Memorandum 56 Supplementary statement on the status of Indian women in the proposed new Constitution of India submitted by the three elected representatives of the All India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association, and the National Council of Women in India

Joint Committee, op cit, p 2293 "We have repeatedly urged that we do not desire the communal views to enter into our united ranks We totally refuse to be made party pawns for the purposes of weightage for the convenience of any community By merit and merit alone do we wish to find our rightful place in the councils"

Memorandum 49 on "The Status of Women in the proposed new Constitution," Joint Committee, op cit, p 2289 "We are of opinion that a system of franchise and representation based upon communal electorates and interests as proposed in the White Paper will be highly detrimental to the progress of the Indian people as a whole and to that of women in particular We stand united in our demand for a system of joint electorates and in our protest against the communal award as it will introduce the poison of communalism into the now united ranks of the women of India"

³ All India Muslim League and All India Muslim Conference Joint Committee, op cit, p 1477 (VII C)

Star of India, Simla, dated July 6, 1933, also advocates communal representation of women Quoted in Joint Committee, op cit, p 9388 (p 1482)

⁴ Joint Committee, op cit, p 13618 (p 1763)

⁵ Especially when the moneylender is a Hindu and the peasant a Mussulman See S S Thornburn, *Mussalmans and Moneylenders in the Punjab*, 1886. Quoted in H K Trevaskis, *The Land of the Five Rivers*, pp 333 ff

Government,¹ the struggle between the industrial and agricultural classes² form another feature of this period.

IX. SUMMARY

These class struggles show the extent of the differentiation of these classes. They also reveal five distinct characteristics

1 The first characteristic is this. The opposition to the Congress creed, while objectively correct in some cases, subjectively showed the national origins of the opponents. That is, the opposition ran on lines of historical communities such as Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil nad, Malabar, and Andhra. National forms of opposition came into prominence with objective logic, though not complete.

2 The second characteristic is the utilization of every existing cleavage between various classes within the same organizations by imperialism for its policy of counterpoise.

3 The third characteristic showed itself in the need for unity. In the midst of these struggles between various classes, unity movements arose as frantically as in proportion to the intensity of the class struggles. Hindu unity movements were followed by Moslem unity movements. The history of unity movements in India is a history big with disunion and discord. "Where there are no common interests, there can be no unity of purpose, much less of action. When interests so varied, so conflicting, so strangely crossing each other are brought into violent collision, when these contending interests in every

¹ If it were not for the moneylender the government would never collect taxes," declared an official of the Bombay Presidency before the Royal Commission on agriculture. Quoted in Fox, *Colonial Policy of British Imperialism*, p. 43

The usurious Loans Act of 1918, which is designed to protect borrowers, is practically a dead letter. Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Cmd. 3132 1928, p. 438. It is agreed that the law (against usury) has not been generally successful." Royal Commission on Labour op cit. p. 229

Another significant fact is, the subordinate Judges to whom most cases come were largely recruited from the Hindu moneylending classes. See Trevaskis, op cit., p. 319

V. B. L. Price, *Indian Legislative Economics* 1921 p. 4. "From all this I deduce that an economic conflict is imminent between the cultivators and the industrialists of India."

V. H. L. Calvert, *Wealth and Welfare of the Progab* p. iv

district, every province, are mixed in different proportions, what else is to be expected but that the contest will dissolve itself into a mass of unconnected struggles, without any decisive results " These unity movements have now discovered the correct objective class content, which could be used as a base for unity They paved the way for a real unity movement today The Congress with all its groups is moving towards that direction ¹ The Trade Union Movement has achieved formal unity The circumstances are now more favourable than before for a United National Front against imperialism

4 The fourth characteristic is seen in the struggle of these classes which is of a contradictory, unequal, and combined character The political physiognomy of these classes is conditioned by the country's social economy plus British imperialism. It is contradictory, because it is one of opposition and collaboration; unequal, because it is between the earlier and later entrants into the field of political and commercial power, combined, because it is between backwardness and development It is precisely this character of the Indian class struggles that is heading them towards further class differentiation and revolutionization

5 Lastly, these struggles disclose certain paradoxes. The conservative classes of both the Hindu and the Moslem faith organized themselves on religious lines By so doing they applied the policy of "weightage" or "counterpoise" among themselves But the Hindu conservative classes came out solidly against communal representation In the case of women organizations also a paradox is to be noted Both the advanced and the backward women organizations came out solidly against communal representation There was no cleavage of interests on this question.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India and the World*, p 207 (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd) "On the whole the Congress functions as a kind of joint front (including many groups)—a *front populaire*—against British Imperialism "

Further History of the Idea of Communal Representation

It is under the whip of these struggles that the Government of India appointed the Muddiman Committee, the Indian Statutory Commission, the Royal Commission on Labour, and the Round Table Conferences¹ Our object is not to sketch the political history of these commissions and conferences, but to sketch the history of communal representation, and the changes it had undergone during this period of class struggles

In 1923, when the Hindu-Moslem alliance of the non-co-operative period came to grief, Das in Bengal entered into a pact designed to settle Hindu and Moslem differences. The Swarajists, too, surrendered to the creed of communal representation. The pact was rejected by the Congress. A draft national pact was prepared, but came to nothing

At this stage, Viscount Peel in the House of Lords called attention to a statement made by Lord Olivier in a letter to Satyamurti, then a member of the Madras Legislative Council. The statement was, "that the maintenance of communal system is antagonistic to the possibility of any proper working of democratic institutions in India. In the course of a debate on this statement in the House of Lords, on June 3, 1924, Lord Olivier explained that though communal electorates had been found necessary, it was in his opinion a political truism that to have a mosaic of communal constituencies, all of which were exacerbating their own differences, was antagonistic to, or in other words, militated against the progress of democratic

¹ From 1924 began the interminable series of Commissions of Enquiry of formal and informal consultations with leading Indians which were to culminate in the Round Table Conferences the Muddiman Committee in 1924, the Statutory Commission in 1927 the Royal Commission on Labour in 1929, and the Round Table Conferences in 1930-32

institutions¹ Lord Curzon in reply declared that the Government of which he was a member had no intention of abolishing the communal system²

In 1924 the Reforms Enquiry Committee noted that the introduction of the reform scheme contributed to the growth of communal friction.³ Yet it came to the following conclusion in its majority report "We consider that the abolition of any special communal electorates—and in this we include reserved seats—is quite impracticable at the present time"⁴ The majority expressed the hope that no further extension of communal representation would be found necessary They observed that before it is permitted, any community should be required to prove that it will suffer very appreciably if the existing arrangements continue⁵ With all liberal sentiments the minority also affirmed that under the present conditions it was unavoidable, that due regard must be paid to communal interests, and that they should be adequately protected by provisions in the constitution⁶

In its sessions held in 1924, 1925, and 1926, the All-India Muslim League continued to emphasize its adherence to separate representation of Moslems

By 1926 a change took place The movement against communal electorates began to gather strength Communal electorates were stated to be the root cause of dissension between the two communities This led the Moslems⁷ to seek an assurance from the Government that no change was contemplated at the time The Viceroy at the Chelmsford Club in August 1926 made a statement that there was no thought of curtailing or amending the system

Lord Birkenhead tried to give a quasi-social explanation to the communal tension It was not true to deny all connection

¹ 57 H.L. Deb 5 S, pp 810-40

² Ibid, p 837

³ Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee, 1924 (Muddiman Committee), Cmd 2360, 1925, para 59, p 51

⁴ Ibid, para 69, p 60

⁵ Ibid, para 69, p 61

⁶ Ibid, p 179 (The Minority Report was drawn by Sapru, Aiyer, Jinnah, and Paranjpye—all Indian moderates)

⁷ The word Moslem is used here in the sense of "backward Moslem professional classes" as opposed to "nationalist Moslem professional classes" On the question of communal representation the Moslems are divided into three groups See Report of the Indian Central Committee, op cit, p 111

between the reforms and the present Hindu-Moslem tension, but it was a grossly inadequate explanation to attribute it either to the existence of reforms or to their nature. As far as tangible cause of tension could be assigned, it was found, according to him, in the general post-war unsettlement which gave a final quietus to the system of paternal government and allowed component elements of the Indian population to take stock of their position, and insist increasingly and vehemently on their own rights. It was doubtless true, he said, that the communal system tends to stereotype cleavage, but he doubted whether the reforms of 1919 without communal representation would have assuaged communal feelings.¹

On account of further insistence on this principle of communal representation by Moslems, Sir Sankaran Nair moved a resolution on March 10, 1927, in the Council of State, to the effect that no further step should be taken towards responsible government until the Hindus and Moslems agreed to dispense with the election of members to the legislatures by separate electorates composed only of Hindus and Moslems. An amendment was moved by a Moslem member to provide for the retention of separate electorates, and a further amendment to permit constitutional advance with joint electorates and protection for minorities. After a discussion the amendment was negatived and the original resolution was withdrawn. The resolution served the purpose of ventilating the views of various sections on the subject of communal representation. During the debate the Moslems did not evince any desire of abandoning communal electorates.

A few days later, some Moslem members of the Legislature at an informal meeting indicated that they would agree to the institution of joint electorates on condition that Sind be separated from Bombay Presidency, that reforms be introduced into Baluchistan and N.W. Frontier Province on the same lines as in other provinces. These are mostly Moslem places. In provinces where the Moslems are in a minority, they indicated their willingness to take the same concessions that they were prepared to make to the Hindu minorities elsewhere. In the case of Punjab and Bengal, they suggested representation

¹ July 28 1926 Vol. 65, H.L. Deb 5 S., p 306

on the basis of population. These proposals were denied later by all sections of Moslem opinion.

Three days after the Muslim Conference, the Hindu members of the Indian Legislature met in Delhi to consider these Moslem proposals. They agreed practically to all of them excepting the one of rearrangement of provincial boundaries. At the meeting of the Hindu Maha Sabha, a few days later, it was decided that the suggestions of the Muslim Conference were not yet ripe for discussion.

The question of joint *versus* separate electorates has continued to be a much-debated issue. It has been taken up by various political organizations. The All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in May 1927 declared itself in favour of the Moslem proposals at Delhi. It conceded the principle of redistribution of provinces. It resolved

“This committee is of opinion that the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis—a principle that has been adopted by the constitution of the Congress. It is also of opinion that such re-adjustment of provinces be immediately taken in hand, and that any province which demands such reconstitution on linguistic basis be dealt with accordingly. It is further of opinion that a beginning be made by constituting Andhra, Sind, and Karnatak into separate provinces.”¹

This idea of redistribution of provinces arose out of acute struggles between the Hindu and the Moslem professional classes. The Congress agreed to the Moslem suggestion of separating Sind from the Bombay Presidency. It also extended this principle to Andhra and Karnatak.

The Hindu-Moslem Unity Resolution passed by the Madras Congress of December 1927 was based on the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee passed at Bombay in May 1927. It again declared its faith in the re-adjustment of provinces.²

The acute struggles between these classes shifted them from

¹ Quoted in Appendix vii (Resolutions passed by the All India Congress Committee at Bombay in May 1927), Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv, p. 176.

² Appendix viii (the Unity Resolution of the Madras Sessions of the Indian National Congress of December 1927). Quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv, pp. 177-78.

one position to another. At first it was on separate electorates. Next it was on joint electorates. Later it was on the redistribution of provinces. These struggles at every stage emphasize their extreme dependence on imperialism.

Meanwhile acute dissensions were taking place in the All-India Muslim League. Rival meetings of the same body were held at Calcutta and Lahore owing to differences of opinion between the leaders. The Calcutta Session of the All-India Muslim League 'practically endorsed the Delhi proposals of March 1927'.¹ The Lahore Session adhered to the principle of separate electorates. This is an instance of the struggle between the "backward" and the 'advanced' Moslem professional classes. The Lahore session further opposed any redistribution of provinces that affected the Moslem majority of the population in the Punjab, Bengal, NW Frontier Province, Baluchistan, and Sind.² This opposition is untenable. A redistribution of these provinces would not affect the Moslem majority of the population at all.

The Indian Liberal Federation affirmed that national patriotism could best be developed by a system of joint electorates, qualified by the reservation of seats for important minorities until it be possible with the goodwill of the communities concerned to dispense with reservation of seats.³

(The Hindu Maha Sabha opposed communal representation and communal electorates. It resolved that the redistribution of provinces in India, if and when necessary, should be made on merit with due regard to administrative and financial considerations, but no new province should be created with the object of giving a majority therein to any particular community.⁴

¹ Appendix ix (Resolution passed by the Calcutta Session of the All India Muslim League, December 1927). Quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv pp 178-79.

² Appendix x (Resolution passed by the Lahore Session of the All India Muslim League, December 1927). Quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv pp 179-80.

³ Appendix xi (Resolution passed by the Indian Liberal Federation in December 1927 at Bombay). Quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv p 180.

⁴ Appendix xii (Resolution passed by the Delhi Session of the All India Hindu Maha Sabha on February 8, 1928). Quoted in Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv p 181.

In other words, the Maha Sabha is opposed to the redistribution of provinces

On the eve of the general economic depression all over India, and consequent industrial and agrarian discontent, an All-Party Conference was held at Delhi in February–March 1928. It consisted of the representatives of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Liberal Federation, the South Indian Liberal Federation of Madras, the Landholders' Association, the Sikh League, the Central Khalifate Committee, the Indian States People Conference, the National Home Rule League, the Bombay Swarajya Sabha, the Trade Union Congress, the Republic League, and the Hindu Maha Sabha.¹ It declared itself in favour of joint electorates subject for the present to reservation of seats² and redistribution of provinces.³ It went further than the All-India Congress Committee of 1927 in extending the principle of redistribution to other areas demanding separation on linguistic basis.

During the period of 1923–1928 an idea emerged—the idea of redistribution of provinces. It was not correctly formulated. "It was tainted with communalism, but the manner in which it was formulated did not necessarily weaken the merits of the proposal."⁴ These words, used by the All-Parties Conference, are aptly applicable to itself. The reasons which drove these classes to this idea are precisely the same as those which drove them to political organizations such as the Congress and the League. The desire for more loaves and fishes of office, and to neutralize competition with the advanced classes for political jobs, which would result from the creation of new provinces, are some of the reasons. Again this idea is the result of increasing differentiation between the various strata of the middle classes of different communities and faiths. None of these middle classes

¹ All these are middle-class organizations, excepting the Trade Union Congress, but it was led by middle-class intellectuals, lawyers, engineers, etc.

² All-Parties Conference Report 1928 (called also Nehru Report), p. 30. "Separate electorates must therefore be discarded completely as a condition precedent to any rational system of representation. We can only have joint or mixed system of representation. We can only have joint or mixed electorates."

³ Ibid., p. 61. "It is clear that there must be a redistribution of provinces."

⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

put forward this principle on grounds of historical, linguistic, and cultural traditions.¹ None of them have envisaged the prerequisites necessary for a solution of the national question in India at present known as the redistribution movement. They imitated the ruling class in giving other official reasons masking the real ones. They spoke of language and tradition in their reports, while in reality they should have spoken of 'jobs' and "offices." They did it because of the impossibility of getting further concessions from the Government at present, and the possibility of getting offices, of lessening competition between the various strata of the middle classes if new provinces were created. The Hindu Maha Sabha opposed this because it was afraid of new Moslem provinces. Broadly formulated, this idea came to the forefront of politics during this period of acute class struggles. The present political stage of the National question in India can be gleaned from the redistribution movement. Careerism hitherto emphasized 'communal representation.' Now it is emphasizing 'redistribution of provinces.'

¹ All-Parties Conference Report p. 62

The Round Table Conference

THE Government of India had a grand opportunity to revise its ideas of "communities, classes, and interests" It had an opportunity, in the light of the acute class struggles of the period, to undo the work of Morley and Montagu, but so long as it clung to the absolute of "counterpoise" it could not make use of such opportunities The greater the struggles and the differentiation between the various classes, the more they resorted to the principle of counterpoise Naturally there is no note of variation in their official theory of separate electorates The Indian Statutory Commission recommended the continuance of separate communal electorates¹ It rounded off this recommendation with the usual apologies It reported that it could not find any agreement pact on this question as Montagu and Chelmsford found in the Lucknow Pact² It did not regard the Nehru Report as an agreement pact After summarizing various views on communal representation, it recorded that Moslems wanted separate electorates, that political Hinduism was willing to adopt joint electorates with reservation of seats,³ and that, therefore, it could not help recommending the retention of communal electorates To expect the Commission to recommend their abolition is to expect the Commission to recommend that the Government of India abandon the policy of counterpoise

The Indian Central Committee appointed to participate in the labours of the Statutory Commission⁴ came to the same theoretical objections to communal electorates as the previous commissions "The majority of us regard the principle of communal electorates as inherently vicious and unsound We

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol II, p 63

² Ibid , pp 59 f

³ Ibid , pp 56, 57 f , 58, 59

⁴ Report of the Indian Central Committee, 1928, Cmd 3451, p 7

desire to see them abolished throughout India as soon as possible.' Yet they add, "We are prepared to recommend the retention of communal electorates only in exceptional circumstances."¹ "Some of us are strongly of the opinion that separate electorates which now form part of the electoral system should not be abolished except with the consent of the community concerned."² They recommended that in Bengal there should be no separate electorates for Hindus and Moslems, and no reservation of seats, but the two communities should vote in joint electorate.³ They recommended the abolition of reservation of seats for non-Brahmins in Madras and Maharattas in Bombay.⁴ They recommended the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency.⁵

The Committee did not consider the question of communities, classes, and interests any more precisely than the Government of India. They trod the familiar path with a few liberal concessions. They practically favoured the continuance of communal electorates.

Sankaran Nair, Raja Nawab Ali Khan, Sardar Shevdev Singh Oberoi in their separate memorandum sketched the evils of communalism,⁶ but they did not analyse its causes. They attributed the evils to the reforms alone. They came to the conclusion that special electorates should be dispensed with and a system of election by joint electorates should be introduced.⁷ Other members protested against communal electorates in similar strains.⁸

¹ Report of the Indian Central Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 42-43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 110-118.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118. See for a Moslem point of view the Minute of Dissent by Nawab Sir Lutfiqar Ali Khan and Suhrawardy. *Ibid.* pp. 183-214.

⁸ Sir Hari Singh Gour also condemns Moslem demands, *ibid.* p. 271.

On the whole we feel that if our Moslem brethren are to grow up it can only be by abandoning the chimera of communalism which will soon atrophy their mental vision and paralyse their national development.

Kirshabhai Premchand, "Report on Constitutional Reforms for India" (Central Committee Report, p. 399). It is my emphatic opinion that joint electorates should be universally established. In no circumstances whatever am I prepared to agree to the perpetuation of communal electorates, either for Mahomedans, or Europeans, or any other body or to any extension of communal electorates at the present stage.

Ibid. p. 401. Naturally the prominence given to the Hindu-Moslem

The despatches from provincial governments recommended communal electorates in the same way ¹ The Government of India Despatch, in spite of the various views expressed against communal electorates, subscribed to their retention ²

The scene now shifts to London The British showed what their policy of counterpoise would look like, under the altered circumstances of the period, in their management of the Round Table Conference They claimed to have brought all communities, classes, and interests into the Conference "The Moslems were set against the Hindus, the Sikhs against the Moslems, the Tenants against the Landlords, and the Princes against their subjects, all against one and one against all ."³ It was a Babel of imperialism, of communal cacophonists London witnessed the edifying spectacle of "Indian toreadors" of middle-class politics hurling defiance at one another The British ruling class naturally wanted the people to infer that a strong hand was necessary to manage these "tadpoles" and "tapeworms" of Indian politics

✓ The Congress as a whole did not participate in the First Round Table Conference While not formally participating in the Conference, the Congress indirectly took part through the liberals Sapru and Sastri The liberals before their departure for London had a number of conferences with the arrested

controversy has infected other communities The Depressed classes, the non-Brahmin, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indian and the Sikhs, to mention only a few, have all put forward their claims and separate electorates are becoming an obsession "

¹ Despatches from provincial governments in India containing proposals for constitutional reform, 1930, Cmd 3712 *Bengal Government*, p 59 "Their view is that however undesirable in principle communal representation may be, conditions in Bengal are such that the present system must be continued until the two communities agree upon some other method of representation" *Bihar and Orissa Government*, p 264 "With the unanimous view of the Commission that under present conditions communal representation must be continued, the local government are in complete agreement "

² Government of India's Despatch, op cit , 1930, p 27 "At the same time in agreement with the Statutory Commission and with every provincial government, we are constrained to the opinion that the privilege which they now possess cannot and should not be taken from the Moslem community against their wish "

³ S S Caveeshar, *Non-Violent Non-Co-operation*, National Publications, Lahore, 1934, p. 219

leaders of the Congress. On the basis of these negotiations the liberals went to the Conference. The *Bombay Chronicle* wrote 'Everyone in Britain and India will say without hesitation that only the Indian National Congress has made the Round Table Conference a possibility.'¹ A hand-picked conference was the worst place to look for capacious minds who could discern the unwisdom of communal electorates.

The discussions in the Minorities Sub-Committees showed that some of the leaders approached the question of communal electorates from the angle of nationalism.² They did not explain what they meant by nationalism. Is it from the standpoint of United India? Is it from the angle that India is a nation? Is it from the point of view of identifying the particular class interests with those of the society? Whatever was the angle, they saw the futility of communal electorates. They expressed also their aversion to separate electorates, but since one community demanded it, they also wanted to have it.³

¹ *Bombay Chronicle* January 18 and January 25, 1930.

² Sir P. C. Mitter. It can well be understood that if we have communal cleavages, if our future democracy be one section Hindu, one section Mussalm, one section Sikh, and one section the Depressed classes, then although we may get nationalism, it will be a much longer path. Indian Round Table Conference, 1930-1931. Proceedings Sub-Committee III, p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95. Moonje. They are all prepared to merge their whole lot in the common pool of Indian nationalism.

Ibid., p. 111. Sir Chemanlal Setalvad. I beseech you to remember whether you be Hindus or Mussalmans or whether you belong to any other community that you are the children of the soil of India. You have to live together—you can only build up the prosperity of your country if you here and now build on mutual trust and confidence and concord the real nation of India.

⁴ Patro. I stand for joint electorates. I do not deny that this is the best system we can devise, but is it expedient at present to have the joint system? Indian Round Table Conference Proceedings, op. cit. p. 83.

Ibid., p. 112. Setalvad. "As I have said, and again repeat, although I disapprove of separate electorates, if our Moslem brethren want separate electorates let them have them."

Ibid., p. 113. Sir Ahmad Said Khan. I am fully alive to the disadvantages of the separate electorates, we should not insist upon the abolition of communal representation at this stage.

Sardar Ujjal Singh. I certainly believe that unless that mentality changes joint electorates are not going to carry us very much further.

Muhammad Ali. Freedom for India is not separate electorates, though being one of the authors of the separate electorates in 1906, I shall be the last to surrender them." Appendix II, Proceedings, op. cit. p. 143.

The leaders imitated their masters. Like them, they expressed their theoretical objections to communal electorates, but since the time was not ripe they would like to have protection and safeguards. When they speak of protection and safeguards, they mean, as the debates show, "Guarantee of employment and services." The communalists, Gidney for Anglo-Indians, Paul for Indian Christians, Shafi for Moslems, and Singh for Sikhs, stated it openly.¹ The problems discussed at this committee were so unreal that one leader ventured to say "I think it would be wrong to allow communal difficulties so to obsess our minds as to obscure the real problems of India."²

(After much discussion, claims were advanced by various communities that arrangements should be made for communal representation and for fixed proportion of seats. It was also urged that the number of seats reserved for a minority community should in no case be less than its proportion in population. They next discussed the methods by which this could be secured. They unanimously deprecated nomination. They discussed the methods of joint electorates with reservation of seats, but expressed doubts as to its value. The discussion made it evident that the demand which remained as the only one which would be generally acceptable was separate electorates. In other words, the First Round Table Conference would appear to endorse the principle of separate electorates.³

The Second Round Table Conference distinguished itself

¹ Gidney wanted two things, employment and education. Proceedings, op cit, p 93

Cf Sir Harcourt Butler, *The Insistent India*, 1931, p 68 "The loaves and fishes of office was more sought after than self-governing institutions."

K T Paul, speaking on behalf of Indian Christians, says "in fact, from the time when the Morley-Minto reforms were introduced we have found ourselves in an extremely difficult position, because every now and then we are liable to be squeezed out in the sharing of the various positions and opportunities among the more powerful communities." Proceedings, op cit, pp 87-88

Muhammad Shafi "all I want is that justice shall be done to my community in the great changes that are going to be introduced in India. I claim nothing but justice." Proceedings, op cit, pp 100-1

Sir Ujjal Singh "I beg of Muslim brethren to concede to us the same concessions and the same protection which they seek from the Hindu majority." Proceedings, op cit, p 114

² Shiva Rao Proceedings, op cit, p 82

³ Sub-Committee Report, Proceedings, op cit, pp 140-41

with the presence of Gandhi. The Congress officially participated. But it could not dilute the reactionary communal character of the Conference. Jobbery and opportunism reigned rampant. 'It was all jobbery—big jobs, little jobs, jobs and seats for the Hindus, for the Moslems, for the Sikhs, for the Anglo-Indians, for the Europeans, but all jobs for the upper classes, the masses had no look in.'¹ The personal offers of Gandhi to rally the communalists on the platform of Independence by conceding their demands were also in vain. It was in this atmosphere that the Conference recorded 'with deep regret that it has been unable to reach any agreed conclusion on the difficult and controversial question.'² Let us examine the various proposals submitted to this Conference by various organizations and delegates.

The Congress scheme, as the working committee thought, was a compromise between undiluted communalism and undiluted nationalism.³ It proposed that a Bill of Fundamental Rights should include a guarantee to the communities concerned of the protection of their cultures, languages, scripts, education, profession, and practice of religion, and religious endowments. Personal laws should be protected by specific provisions. Joint electorates should form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India. Appointments should be made by a non-party Public Service Commission. Sind should be constituted into a separate province. Moonje on behalf of the Hindu Sabha submitted a memorandum on the Congress formula of communal settlement. He enlarged the Congress scheme so as to include castes. He declared his opposition to separate electorates.⁴ His views represented those of the conservative and orthodox professional classes. The Moslems, the Depressed Classes, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians, and the Europeans put forward a joint proposal.⁵

¹ Nehru, *Autobiography* p. 293.

² Indian Round Table Conference, Second Session, Cmd. 3997 (1932) p. 63.

³ Second I.R.T.C., op. cit., pp. 64-65 (The Congress Scheme for a Communal Settlement, Appendix I.)

⁴ Second I.R.T.C., op. cit., pp. 65-67 (Appendix II. Memorandum on the Congress formula of Communal Settlement. By Dr B. S. Moonje.)

⁵ Second I.R.T.C., op. cit. pp. 68-70 (Appendix III.)

proved himself theoretically inconsistent. His sole argument was that since separate electorates were demanded by all, he would not hesitate to stress their need for the protection of Hindu minorities in Punjab.¹ This is how the middle-class leaders argued without any pretence to theoretical exactitude.

(The Hindu Maha Sabha held strongly the view that communal representation was fundamentally opposed to nationalism.) In opposing communalism, the Hindu Maha Sabha is in reality proposing Hindu communalism. It masquerades it under the cloak of nationalism.² It also thought that this principle was unsuited to responsible government. It declared for uniformity of franchise for all communities in each province. It further declared that in no circumstance should there be any reservation of seats in favour of any majority community in any province, and that the redistribution of provinces in India, if and when necessary, should be made on its merits in the light of principles capable of a general application with due regard to administrative, financial, and other considerations. The Sabha's opposition to the separation of Sind was based on communal grounds. It was opposed to the creation of a Moslem State. It wanted Hindustan to remain intact without being dismembered. Here, again, it advanced the idea in the name of Hindustan—land of Hindus.³ It further opposed communal representation in services and cabinets. It once again affirmed its faith in joint electorates.⁴

The supplementary memorandum on the claims of the Depressed Classes was also for special representation. It urged the necessity of changing the name of Depressed Classes to

Punjab (Appendix xvi p 108) Sardar Ujjal Singh also recommended redistribution of Punjab (Appendix xvii, p 112) To these ideas Narendra Nath replied "On the whole I think that partition of Punjab will afford no solution of the communal problem. All partition schemes should, in my opinion, be shelved." (Appendix xvi(A), p 111)

¹ Second I.R.T.C. (Appendix v "Claims of the Hindu Minority in Punjab" by Raja Narendra Nath), pp 76-78

² Nehru, *Autobiography* p 467

³ Moonje uses the word Hindustan—land of Hindus, including Sikhs, Buddhists or Moslems. See Joint Committee, op cit. p 1445

⁴ Second I.R.T.C. (Appendix, Memorandum by Dr B S Moonje), pp 78-81 Supplementary statement by Dr B S Moonje.

Ibid., pp 81-84. Here too he emphasized the need for joint electorates and declared himself in favour of a declaration of fundamental rights

Non-caste Hindus, Protestant Hindus, Non-conformist Hindus, or some such designation ¹

The memorandum on the claims of Indian Christians made it essential that their representation should be through a separate electorate of their own. It suggested the incorporation of fundamental rights in the new Constitution.²

When the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were under consideration the non-Brahmins of Madras and the Maharattas of Bombay started an agitation to protect their interests from the dominant influence of the advanced communities. In the Government of India Act of 1919 their claims were recognized, and some seats were reserved for them in multiple seat constituencies. The Maharattas and the allied communities, who had so far enjoyed protection under the reservation clause, were desirous that the concession should be continued for a further period. The Government of Bombay was of the opinion that the concession was no longer necessary, but the communities preferred to crawl on their bellies, and desired the continuance of such a concession as under the above Act.³ They believed that the principle of reservation worked as a safety valve.⁴

The labour leaders, middle class in training and outlook, opposed the continuance of separate electorates for communities divided according to religion or race. They believed in the efficacy and soundness of not dividing the community on a religious or racial basis. Communal and racial feelings have had comparatively little influence on the movement, and the workers are organized as an economic class, not as Hindus, Moslems, or untouchables. Their grave fear was that communal electorates with the introduction of a full suffrage would create a false division among the workers and break the solidarity of the working-class movement. They held that the communal problem was a problem of the past. The real problems are social and economic, and it would be wrong to build the Constitution in a manner which has no relation to

¹ Second I R T C (Appendix vii, op cit), pp 84-86

² Second I.R T C (Appendices viii-ix by Selvam and Gidney), pp 86-90

³ Second I R T C (Appendix by B V Jadhav on the Maharattas and Allied Communities), pp 90-91

⁴ Ibid, p 91

the realities of today. They preferred a division of the electorates on an occupational rather than on a communal or a territorial basis. They therefore opposed the extension to the workers of the principle of electorates based on religion or race as being detrimental to their interests. Their position, as their middle-class leaders have stated, was that if adult suffrage was introduced on a basis of joint electorates and no other special interests were recognized, labour would not ask for a reservation of seats or the creation of special constituencies, but in the event of even one of these conditions failing to be fulfilled, labour would have both.¹ The Royal Commission on Labour recommended the formation of trade unions as special constituencies.² Trade unions represent an elementary form of mass organization of workers. They are a necessary part of the class education and training of the working masses. As such, the trade unions welcome this proposal for a revolutionary utilization of the existing situation. The question is, who will represent these trade union constituencies—the middle-class leaders, or working-class leaders, or leaders who have aligned themselves completely with the working-class ideology?³

The liberal Sir Chemanlal Setalvad thought that the communal problem was very much exaggerated, and was exploited in certain quarters for retarding responsible government. He thought that there was the largest measure of general agreement on all matters which are really vital and essential—like the separation of Sind and the constitution of N W F Province. He was opposed to further extension of separate electorates. He advocated reservation of seats for the Depressed

¹ Second I.R.T.C. (Appendix xi. Labour under the new Constitution by Joshi, Rao and Giri), pp. 91-95.

² Royal Commission on Labour *op. cit.*, pp. 462-64.

Report of the Indian Franchise Committee 1932 Cmd. 4086, pp. 101-4. The Committee indicated that trade union constituencies and special labour constituencies are in their judgment, the appropriate solution in present conditions of the problem of the representation of labour.

³ Cf. Royal Commission on Labour p. 328. "An equally urgent need is the development of leadership from within the ranks of labour. At present the unions depend for their leaders mainly on social workers, lawyers and other professional and public men. A few of these have interested themselves in the movement in order to secure private and personal ends. The majority however are actuated by an earnest desire to assist labour."

Classes¹ Sir P C Mitter suggested that a commission be appointed to investigate the communal problem²

Women also were considered to constitute a minority Mrs. Subbarayan submitted a memorandum urging that a fixed proportion of women to the legislatures should be fixed for a temporary period³ A number of women's organizations demanded equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any bar on account of sex⁴

These are some of the proposals that came up for discussion at the Second Round Table Conference It was all jobbery These discussions show the diversity of interests that came for reconciliation during this Conference The British now have no need to look for classes for an adequate counterpoise against the politically predominant ones Their policy of counterpoise gave an impetus to the rise of classes who demanded various shares equal to those that excelled them When the field for realization of interests is not wide, on account of British policy in India, the backward professional classes rally round the Government against the advanced classes for spoils of office⁵ under the banner of communal electorates

{ The history of communal representation in India is the history of the class struggles between the backward educated middle-class intelligentsia and the politically dominant professional classes⁶ This struggle has taken several forms according to the psychology of the communities from which these backward middle-class intelligentsia come The Depressed

¹ Second I.R.T.C (Appendix xii Memorandum for the Minorities Committee), pp 95-97

² Second I.R.T.C (Appendix xv and Supplementary Memorandum by P C Mitter), pp 103-7

³ Second I.R.T.C (Appendix xiv), pp 97-99

⁴ Ibid (Appendix xiv), pp 99-102

⁵ J C Wedgwood "In fact, in India under the communal representation they have had, you may say that most posts are now decided, whether it be posts of importance or posts of unimportance, not by works, but by faith

So that the arguments in favour of communal representation are, roughly speaking, that it provides certain seats for certain people, and jobs for the supporters of the community" Joint Committee, op cit, Minutes of Evidence, vol 11 A, p 127

⁶ Memorandum for the Indian Statutory Commission on Minority Communities in Bihar and Orissa in Indian Statutory Commission, vol xii, p 368 "It is equally arguable that the Hindu and Muhammadan brethren are merely a manifestation of the general struggle for power . "

Classes, the Sikhs and the Moslems, are backward compared to the Hindus in point of education and monopoly of service.¹ It is true that the Anglo-Indians in relation to numbers have a unique monopoly of the services, particularly the strategic ones, and had it even before the introduction of communal representation. But that did not prevent the communalist Gidney from championing what he calls "gilt-edged security" of jobs and professions for his community. These middle-class intelligentsia protested against the dominant classes organizing themselves in the name of religion. The struggle between the advanced and the backward professional classes in Punjab, Bengal, Sind, Baluchistan, and N W F Province has taken the form of a Hindu-Moslem problem. The Moslems in these provinces constitute the backward element. The struggle between the advanced and backward professional classes in Bombay, Central Provinces, and Madras has taken the form of the non Brahmin movement. The non Brahmins in these provinces constitute the backward element. These backward non Brahmin classes come from various historical communities like the Maharattas, Malayales, Kanarese, Tamils, and Andhras. The policy of counterpoise gave an impetus to the further growth of, and consequent struggles between, the various professional classes of various communities in India. These classes conducted their struggles in the name of the communities to which they belonged. But the advanced professional classes demanded recognition in the name of India.

The legal side of this process began with Minto as the culmination of pre-existing counterpoise policies. In the epoch of imperialism it developed into a struggle between the classes. By giving more importance or weightage to the class selected as a counterpoise against an advanced class, the principle of counterpoise is more than retained, and the external impetus for the intensification of struggles is more than assured.

¹ Mr. Yusuf Ali admits that the majority community (Hindu) are superior to the Moslems in wealth and influence. Yusuf Ali: "We do not admit that they are superior to us in any other thing."

Sir Hari Singh Gour: "I never said any other thing. I spoke of wealth and influence." Joint Committee op. cit. 9980-81 (p. 1531)

In the course of the struggles between these classes we note several further characteristics.

1. These backward classes openly and guardedly have declared at the conferences that they want safeguards for securing employment and offices in the contemplated constitutional changes. They want to catch the advanced classes. Their problem, at bottom, is a scramble for offices.

2. None of these classes has shown any case of political oppression or anything of the kind by an advanced class. No class today is in real political power. Even the present Congress ministries lack power of political oppression. Therefore their grievances are imaginary and hypothetical. Their real grievance, as Gidney would put it, is against differential treatment. They demand preferential treatment in the guise of communal representation.

3. None of these classes has shown any theoretical consistency. Time and time again they have declared in favour of joint electorates. Yet, since one community insists on having reserved seats, the others must also have them. This is the quickest gate to their goal, since it eliminates competition.

4. These classes, coming as they do most of them from various "historical communities," reflect a variety of interests. Over this irreconcilability of class antagonisms stands the British Government with an air of apparent impartiality, justifying its presence to hold the scales even; the logical outcome of which is a continuance of a policy of counterpoise.

5. They failed to realize that classes attain a revolutionary perspective, that is, realize their interests, only when their interests are objective and necessary, at the expense of others. They also failed to realize that under imperialism their struggles are deflected and side-tracked. They failed to note in their careerism or communalism a dependence on imperialism.

In the course of the struggle of these classes some new ideas have been advanced.

1. They all agree that the interests of all India should prevail over their class interests. They mean to say, although they are unaware of it, that those class (not communal) interests alone succeed which are of the greatest importance to society.

as a whole. This was a distinct advance towards unity from the previous abortive attempts at it.

2. They all favour joint electorates theoretically. They even argued as to separate electorates within limitations, although there is a good deal of friction between the school of joint electorates and the school of separate electorates.¹

3. They all favour the incorporation of a Bill of Rights in the Constitution safeguarding various interests of various groups.

4. They are also partially agreed as to the principle of redistribution. This also lacks theoretical consistency. Since it arose out of the unequal struggle between the professional classes, it has all the ear-marks of the religion of the communities from which the classes have sprung.

When there is so much agreement on these ideas, though inadequate, born out of the discussions at the Round Table Conferences, why did they fail? Because none of the classes nor the Government paid any attention to the remedial side of the causes of these struggles. It is agreed that educational, social, political, and economic inequalities existing between

¹ The school of separate electorates argues

1. Separate electorates minimize communalism (Joint Committee, op cit., p 1519)

2. Separate electorates are not a negation of democracy (Joint Committee, op cit. 9984, p 1532).

3. The very bitterness existing between the Hindus and Moslems is the cause why communal electorates are necessary (Joint Committee, op. cit., 9980, p 1531)

4. Separate electorates are the best method of representation (Joint Committee op cit. p 1532)

The school of joint electorates argues

1. Separate communal electorates are really incompatible with responsible parliamentary government (Joint Committee, op cit. 9315 p 1470)

2. Communal electorates have tainted public life with communalism (Joint Committee, op cit., pp 1387 ff.)

Suhrawardy answers to objections of communal electorates. The objections are

1. It is against the teaching of history

2. It perpetuates class divisions.

3. It is responsible for communal riots.

4. It encourages a minority to settle down into a feeling of satisfied security

5. It hinders the growth of party system.

6. It hinders the growth of "nationalism."

Supplementary note, Cmd. 3525, pp 44-50

these classes are at bottom the causes for such struggles¹ The whole discussion evaded this important issue. When conditions that gave rise to such struggles remain untouched, when classes cannot gain any more concessions from an alien bureaucracy, struggles within the classes and between the classes and the Government² are inevitable until they culminate in the revolutionary triumph of that class and its allies whose interests approximate to those of the society at large. A break with imperialism is a first necessity

✓¹ Memorandum by Sir Hari Singh Gour, Indian Central Committee, p 252 "Judging from the evidence taken on the subject in India, the claim of the Muhammadans to separate representation is based on the ground that as a community they are backward, both educationally and economically, that as compared with Hindus they have not had the advantage of English education or what comes to the same thing, they have not been able to take advantage of it to the same degree as the Hindus, and that therefore they are not able to run an even race for political power with the better educated Hindus, who would swamp the councils and drive them into a corner if separate electorates are done away with This argument postulates that the Muslims, being backward, should be given a larger measure of political power The Hindus complain that if the Muslims, who are undoubtedly a backward community, are given an undue proportion of political power, they might act as a drag on the political progress of India and that it is a political heresy to permit a backward community to rule or materially retard the policy of an advanced community "

Minute of Dissent by Khan and Suhrawardy, Central Committee, p 196 "The capitalist (Hindu) has already reduced him (the Moslem) to penury by usury, he is backward in education, he is deficient in organization, he has practically no share in the trade of the country "

✓ Supplementary note by Suhrawardy, 1930, Cmd 3525, pp 46-47 "As rightly pointed out by Lala Lajput Rai one of the main causes of the present communal troubles is the existing economic distress and unemployment, the conflict of capital and labour and the clash of interests of landlords and tenants . "

✓² "The increase of communal feeling, due to separate electorates, has been responsible for serious breaches of peace, for disaffection towards the government on the part of that community which has not been favoured by the government rightly or wrongly " (Nair, Khan, Uberoi Memorandum), Indian Central Committee Report, pp 110-11

Role of MacDonald Communal Award, Poona Pact, White Paper, Joint Committee Report, New Constitution Bill for India

THE First and Second Sessions of the Round Table Conference were unable to arrive at a mutual agreement both on the number of seats which the various communities were to secure in the legislature and on the methods of election to those seats. The main issue as regards election was whether separate electorates were to be maintained, or the system of joint electorates with reserved seats was to be employed.

At this stage the Labour Government was overthrown. The so-called National Government came into existence. With this change, the representatives in sympathy with the progressive Indian cause were pushed back. The reactionaries came into prominence. The old game was resumed. Britain assumed the position of an arbiter. It thereupon took the matter in hand.¹ Ramsay MacDonald had a splendid opportunity to settle this problem once and for all. He had some knowledge of India and had written on it. He presided at the Round Table Conferences. He had an opportunity to study the theoretical opinions of Morley, Montagu, and Curtis.² He saw the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, and at the same time a general trend

¹ Memorandum—Communal Award. Sir Samuel Hoare. Joint Committee, op cit. vol. II B pp 813-15

L. Curtis, *Dyarchy* 1920, p 441. Moslems will thus learn to depend on an artificial protection instead of facing the real source of their weakness, their relative backwardness in education. It is like keeping in frosts a weak but healthy limb which only needs exercise to recover its strength. I believe that if this principle is perpetuated we shall have saddled India with a new system of caste which will eat every year more deeply into her life. In conceding the establishment of communal representation we have, I hold, been false to that trust. The system has eaten into the life of this people so deeply that already it is not possible to abolish at one stroke what might have been refused a few years ago."

towards progressive ideas in the Conference. With all these opportunities he gave out his decision in the form of a Communal Award affirming the policy of Minto.¹ It is not surprising that such a decision should come from him. Liberals and conservatives have tackled this question before. A labour leader, committed long ago to the same principle of communal representation, brought nothing new to its solution.² All pursued the same imperial policy, maintaining the best traditions of British continuity. So far as India is concerned, neither liberalism nor labour has a different policy from that of conservatism.

The Communal Award is the affirmation of the policy of counterpoise through a labour spokesman.³ It recognized separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. Another class is brought into the politics of India for a racial, religious, political equilibrium to counter the claims of the dominant Hindu political classes. The other classes, particularly the Moslem, were given more weightage than the Hindus.⁴ The Hindu Maha Sabha contended that the Communal Award was predominantly pro-Moslem and highly unjust to the Hindus.⁵ The Bengal Mahajan Sabha demanded revision as regards allotments of seats between Moslems and Hindus and the Depressed Classes.⁶ Nanak Chand claimed that the Hindus had been most unjustly treated by the Communal Award. The Hindus, who represented about 75 per cent of the whole of British India, had been reduced to a minority of 45 per cent in the Central Legislature.⁷ They had not been given representation even on a population basis, so he argued. Even the

¹ The Award was issued on the 16th of August, 1930, and presented to Parliament as Cmd 4147. This award covered the composition of the provincial legislatures and the method of election to them. For the allocation of seats, see *ibid*, p. 7.

² J. R. MacDonald, *The Government of India*, p. 76.

³ Memorandum 69 by Nanak Chand (Joint Committee, *op cit*, p. 1390). "There is bound to be a perpetual struggle for undue favours and concessions and troubles are inevitable."

⁴ "The Communal Award goes to the length of giving more than a mere statutory majority to the Muhammadans in Punjab." Memorandum 63, Joint Committee, *op cit*, p. 404.

⁵ Joint Committee, *op cit*, vol. II C, p. 1371.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2202.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 1390.

Mahraja of Burdwan told the committee that the Hindus of Bengal would not accept the Award.¹

Women vigorously opposed the Communal Award. They challenged the statement of the Secretary of State for India, who said that it was forced on them by the people of India. The women delegates, both Hindu and Moslem, retorted that they were not a party to that. They disliked being led to electorates they did not want.²

The Indian Christians condemned it. The Sikhs were exasperated. The Depressed Classes disowned it soon afterwards. Even the Moslem communalist organizations like Khilafate, Jamiat-ul-Ulema, Ahrars, Shia Conference, and about thirty other associations repudiated it. They were won over only when Sir Fazl i-Hussain issued a circular requesting the Moslem leaders to support the Award. The circular stated

"Moslems should decide to stand by Government. The Prime Minister's announcement gives the Moslems a position to which they could not have aspired. The announcement makes a distinct advance of Moslem rights. It is distinct and brilliant, effective against Mahasabha, Sikhs, Congress, and Liberals." Only then did the communalist Moslems agree with the principles of the Communal Award. They indicated their willingness to work the Constitution on the basis of the Award, yet they contended that the Moslems had not been fairly treated.⁴

Thus the Communal Award created dissensions and rivalries among the various political classes in India. The class which was originally supposed to be a minority, the Moslem, was now, the Hindus contended, in the majority from the point of view of weightage. This opposition came from the Hindu

¹ Joint Committee, op cit. vol. II A. p. 226

² Joint Committee, op cit. vol. II C. C.159 C.451-53, C.163 Mrs. Hamid Ali "We think it is a loathsome way to work in small compartments and to cut our country into bits."

³ Quoted in Cavvchar *Non-Violent Non-Co-operation*, pp. 307 ff.

⁴ Memorandum 67 The All India Muslim Conference and the All India Muslim League Joint Committee, op cit., p. 1477

India, 1932-33 p. 15 "While the Maha Sabha attacked communal decision and declared that the proposed constitution was predominantly pro-Muslim the Muslim Conference asked for further concession to the Muslim point of view and more effective Muslim representation in the Federal Legislature and the services."

conservative political classes This found expression in the formation of the so-called Congress Nationalist Party on August 18, 1934, by M Malaviya and Aney As one liberal put it, the Congress Nationalist Party "went up like a rocket, but came down like a stick" The struggles between the conservative political classes of different faiths found political expression in the Moslem Nationalist Party under Jinnah and in the Congress Nationalist Party under Malaviya While the one opposed the Communal Award, the other favoured it The Congress Nationalist Party is the political and parliamentary expression of the Hindu Sabha, while the Moslem Nationalist Party is that of Moslem Communalists

The creation of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes split the Hindu political classes into various groups Gandhi opposed this provision of the Award. He threatened to fast to death if it was not altered The provision was not altered Gandhi began to fast The leaders got panicky On an appeal by Malaviya a conference of Hindu leaders met at Bombay on September 19, 1931. It adjourned to Poona to be in touch with Gandhi After prolonged discussions, an agreement was arrived at between the Hindu leaders on September 24th This was known as the Poona Pact It was ratified by the Hindu Leaders' Conference and the Hindu Maha Sabha on September 25, 1931. It was cabled to the Government of India and the Prime Minister On September 26th His Majesty's Government announced that they were prepared to recommend to Parliament the endorsement of the Poona agreement ¹

The Poona Pact was the outcome of Gandhi's fast It was hurriedly drafted in order to save Gandhi from death ² As such

¹ For the circumstances leading to the Poona Pact, see Joint Committee, op cit, p 814

The White Paper proposals on p 91 and p 93 incorporate the terms of the Poona Pact

² "The so-called Poona Pact was not a pact as the White Paper very incorrectly describes it"

"An agreement reached on the 24th of September last between the representatives of the Depressed classes and of the rest of the Hindu community (p 19) It was at best a most panicky modification of the Premier's Award by 5 self-elected Hindu leaders and 3 Depressed class leaders acting under the iniquitous coercion of a 'fast unto death' by Gandhi" Memorandum 70 by Acharya, Joint Committee, op cit, p 1566

it does not reflect any political wisdom. It created a further split in the Hindu political classes. Some non-Congress vernacular papers commented on the incongruity of such a feat of religious asceticism having taken place in a millionaire's bungalow, surrounded by medical attendants and scientific appliances. The responsiveness of the Indian body politic to the stimulus of a Mahatmic fast decreased progressively with the frequency of its application. The Bengal political classes resented this theatrical Gandhian fast, which affected them more politically than others.

By the Poona Pact the numbers of the Depressed Class seats in each province were increased above that recommended by the Communal Award. A different system of panel election was substituted.¹ The total number of Hindu seats for caste Hindus and Depressed Classes taken together remained the same under the Poona Pact as under the original Communal Award. The substance of the Poona Pact was the reservation to the Depressed Classes of a number of seats out of the seats classified as general seats in the Award.

The first opposition to the Pact came from Bengal.² While the Communal Award had provided seventy-one seats in the provincial legislatures for the Depressed Classes, the Poona

¹ "These reserved seats will however be filled by an unusual form of double election. All members of the Depressed classes who are registered on the general electoral roll of certain constituencies will elect a panel of 4 candidates belonging to their own body and the 4 persons who receive the highest number of votes in this primary election will be the only candidates for election to the reserved seat; but the candidate finally elected to the reserved seat will be elected by the general electorate, that is to say by caste Hindus and by members of the Depressed classes alike."

Joint Committee Report vol. I, part I p. 66. As regards the Poona Pact we are bound to say that we consider that the original proposals of His Majesty's Government constituted a more equitable settlement of the general communal question and one which was more advantageous to the Depressed classes themselves in their present stage of development.

Ibid. p. 67.

Ambedkar writes to the Prime Minister "There is no case for reopening of Poona Pact on behalf of the caste Hindus of Bengal. As for the Depressed classes, their spokesman Mullick, has cabled to me that they accept the Poona Pact." Joint Committee, op cit. p. 1361.

The advanced political classes in Bengal regret the Poona Pact. The backward classes, in the name of the Depressed classes, accept the Pact. Tagore also protested against the Poona Pact. Joint Committee, op cit. p. 1360.

Pact provided one hundred and forty-eight In Bengal, where the Hindus already felt grieved by the Communal Award, the Pact was regarded as a further injustice¹ The Poona Pact did not do away with separate electorates altogether On March 14th the Bengal Legislative Council denounced it

Opposition also came from Ambedkar He came out with a statement criticizing the proposed panel system of election on the ground that it would involve Depressed Class candidates in expenses they could not afford He asked that every such candidate should be required to obtain a minimum fixed percentage of Depressed Class votes before he could be declared elected He dropped these suggestions on Gandhi's advice Raja, another leader of the Depressed Classes, stood for reservation of seats for his community on the basis of a common electorate. The Raja-Moonje Pact, based on this proposal, was opposed by Ambedkar. Even the representatives of the Depressed Classes were not immune from internal struggles reflecting the interests of the classes to which they belonged

The Hindu Maha Sabha advocated the amendment of the Poona Pact as regards Punjab, since there is no Depressed Classes problem in Punjab.² The All-India Varnashram Swarajya Sangha condemned the Poona Pact³ Pandit Malaviya regretted his signature to the Pact on the ground that he could not accept its implications Gandhi contended that the Poona Pact, apart from settling the political problem, imposed a certain obligation on the Hindus to abolish untouchability, and to open the doors of the Hindu temples to the untouchables Malaviya contended that there were no such implications in it⁴

The moment the panic was over the unreality of the Pact showed itself It was denounced by caste Hindus as unrepresentative Within forty-eight hours of the acceptance of the

¹ "The Bengalee Hindus are indeed the victims of a twofold injustice They were unjustly treated in the British Government's original Award, and that injustice has been sought to be heightened and perpetuated by the Poona Pact" The Bengal Branch of the Varnashrama Swarajya Sangha, Joint Committee, op cit, p 1565

² Memorandum 57 by the All-India Hindu Maha Sabha Joint Committee, op cit, p 1365

³ Joint Committee, op cit, p 1569 (Memorandum 72)

⁴ Ibid, p 1612

Poona Pact there was a Hindu protest at an open meeting in Bombay¹

The Poona Pact thus represented a cleavage of interests between the Hindu political classes. The leaders of untouchables, Ambedkar, Raja, Gavai, possessed no more unity than the Congress leaders on this question. The Congress leaders were divided on the question of the implications of the Pact. The British created a situation by which further differentiation of classes took place on the question of the Depressed Classes. The recognition of the Poona Pact was no surrender of the policy of counterpoise, which was now applied to the Congress leaders themselves. The Pact, otherwise, was very significant in Indian politics. It brought to the forefront the social question which India must face some time or other. It also sidetracked the civil disobedience movement and the struggle against imperialism. It at the same time served the Government in strengthening its policy of counterpoise.

The White Paper² embodied the principles of the Communal Award modified by the Poona Pact. While giving recognition to the other political classes as pawns to counter the Congress the Government relied mostly on the Moslems and the Depressed Classes for such purposes. The White Paper proposals were distinctly pro-Moslem, so far as communal electorates were concerned.

The Report of the Joint Committee, after examining various proposals and interviewing various people, came to the conclusion that communal representation must be accepted as inevitable at the present time.³ The committee saw a considerable acquiescence in the Award in the absence of any solution agreed between the communities,⁴ and in spite of some general criticisms against the Award. They accepted, therefore, the

¹ Joint Committee, op cit., p 147

Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform 1933, Cmd. 4268 pp 24-25. The White Paper sets out in detail the proposed composition of each provincial legislature, specifying both the allocation of seats and the method of election to them (Appendix III, p 93). In the case of the Legislature Assemblies, these are based upon the Communal Award, with such modifications as have been rendered necessary (1) by the later proposal to create a new province of Orissa, and (2) by the so-called Poona Pact.

Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, vol. I part I Report 1934, p 11

⁴ Ibid., p 67

proposals in the White Paper for communal representation.¹ They even accepted the modification rendered necessary by the acceptance of the Poona Pact ² Once more, the communal electorates are affirmed by His Majesty's Government, and they were embodied in the new Constitution Bill for India

¹ Joint Report, vol 1, part 1, op cit , p 67

² Ibid , p 68

Summary

THE history of communal representation, as we have noted during the last quarter of a century, is the history of the counterpoising policy of the British in India, a history of the offsetting of one sectional interest against another, one class against another. It is a history of the growth of professional classes of various historical communities, and consequently a history of the struggles between these various sections. Morley, Montagu, and MacDonald each successively contributed to the history of these struggles. At one time Moslems were favoured with a view to counter the Hindu professional classes, at another time the Depressed Classes were favoured to offset the Hindu caste classes. Morley liked Mohammedans. Sydenham liked the non-Brahmins. Montagu liked the Sikhs. MacDonald favoured the Depressed Classes. Their personal likes coincided with the imperial policy of offsetting one class against another.

The Communal Award, the White Paper proposals, and the Joint Committee recommendations did not enquire into the causes of the backwardness of the communities they intended to protect. They did not suggest any measures to reduce the educational, social, political, and economic backwardness of these communities.¹ They simply resorted to an artificial protection, they did not enquire precisely into the question of communities, classes, and interests any more than Morley or Montagu. They did not free themselves from the error of cross-divisions. Even when the question of the separation of Sind and Orissa came up for discussion the opportunity was not taken of enquiring into historical communities that are today embedded in artificial provincial boundaries. They did not even need the slogan of communities, classes, and interests as much as they did in 1909. When once the start was given,

¹ Cf. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Government of India*, p. 76. "The representation of communities will raise their status." Does it?

Part III

Parallels in the Empire

I

Communal Representation in Ceylon

I INTRODUCTION

IN embodying the principle of communal representation in the Government of India Act of 1935, neither the ruling class nor the professional and commercial classes, with the exception of a very few, took into account the valuable lessons that could be learnt from the overseas commissions on communal representation in Ceylon and Kenya.

The problem of communal representation has its counterparts in Ceylon and Kenya, where it differs in degree, though not in essentials, from that in India. But in India it has been studied differently from that in Ceylon and Kenya. The Indian Commissions and reports prattle theoretical objections against communal representation, but recommended it as a matter of practical politics. They chanted the same litany from 1909 down to the present day. The overseas Commissions¹ studied the problem in Ceylon and Kenya in a more straightforward manner. They did not make a distinction between theoretical and practical considerations. Whatever theoretical objections they felt against communal representation, they expressed them practically in recommending its abolition. They did not equivocate. This distinction between the Indian and the overseas Commissions is all the more glaring when we recount men like Morley, Montagu, Simon, and MacDonald, who graced the Indian Commissions. How easily did 'continuity' warp the judgments of these men.² But this was not so with the overseas

¹ Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution of Ceylon (hereinafter cited as Donoughmore Report), 1928, Cmd. 3131. Correspondence regarding the Constitution of Ceylon, 1929 Cmd. 3419.

Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies in Eastern and Central Africa (hereinafter cited as Hilton Young Report), 1929 Cmd. 3234.

² The Simon Commission observed in connection with the need for redistribution of provinces: "Once the mould has set, and maldistribution

commissioners They rode over the theory of "continuity" in accordance with the needs as they perceived them ¹ Herein lies the merit of these Commissions so far as their views regarding communal representation are concerned

Ceylon, like India, consists of various elements making up the Ceylonese people ² All the indigenous peoples of the island are collectively described by the term "Ceylonese" They consist of Low Country and Kandyan Sinhalese, Ceylon and Indian Tamils, Ceylon and Indian Moors, Malays, and Burghers Generally speaking, the Sinhalese are Buddhists numbering 2,800,000, the Tamils, Hindus numbering 985,000, the Moors and Malays, Mohammedans numbering 310,000 There is also an important Christian element ³ The caste system prevails among the Sinhalese no less than among the Tamils in spite of the fact that caste distinctions are alien to the teachings of Buddha There are not quite the same classes of untouchables in Ceylon as there are in India, but there are many castes which are denied opportunities of education and

will be still more difficult to correct" Statutory Commission, vol 11, p 26 This is applicable to the case of communal representation The mould was set, and the men found it difficult, so they say, to correct

As a happy contrast, note that the overseas commissioners also found the mould was set, but they did not find it difficult to correct It might be objected that communal representation in Ceylon has no great antiquity to commend it (this is true, Donoughmore Report, p 99), and that is why the commissioners recommended its abolition But communal representation has no great antiquity in India either to commend it In India it came into existence in 1909, in Ceylon in 1920 (Donoughmore Report, p 14).

¹ Donoughmore Report, p 19 "It is no longer enough to criticize a constitution on the debatable grounds of political theory without examining the peculiarities of its environment"

² Report by W G A Ormsby Gore on his visit to Malaya, Ceylon, and Java during the year 1928, Cmd 3235, p 71 "The community of Ceylon is today composed of many races, many religions and many diverse elements, but there is a strong underlying sense of both loyalty and unity"

³ The Christian element together with Burghers and Europeans numbers some 445,000 Population of Ceylon by Race and Religion (1921 census), Appendix IV to Donoughmore Report, p 164 The total population of Ceylon, according to the 1921 census, is 4,498,605 The Ormsby Gore Report estimates the population in 1928 to be 5½ millions, Cmd 3235, p 72 The races according to this census are Low Country Sinhalese, Kandyan Sinhalese, Ceylon-Tamils, Indian-Tamils, Ceylon-Moors, Indian-Moors, Europeans, Burghers and Eurasians, Malays, Veddas and others, *ibid*, p 164 The Low Country and Kandyan Sinhalese are of one stock

advancement. The rigidity of the caste system, as in India, is now relaxed ¹

Although of one stock, the Sinhalese are divided among themselves as they consist of a Low Country and a Kandyan people. The Kandyan, numbering 1,200,000, occupy the Central, North-Central, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, and part of the North-Western Province. They remember with pride their ancient kingdom. Among their highlands they have preserved much of the conservatism and many of the customs and habits of their forefathers ²

The Low Country Sinhalese form the bulk of the population in the Western and Southern Provinces, and in the remaining part of the North-Western. The accessibility of these provinces to the outside world, combined with the fertility of the soil, has made them prosperous and progressive, and their people more cosmopolitan in outlook than the Kandyans ³

The Ceylon-Tamils number 540,000. They inhabit mainly the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Their ancestors were originally settlers from Southern India, but they are now regarded as an integral part of the Ceylonese people. They obtained political influence somewhat disproportionate to their numerical strength, like the Moslems in India.⁴ Formerly

¹ Donoughmore Report p. 91. See also for a general description Ormsby Gore Report, p. 71.

² Ormsby Gore Report p. 71: "Feudal traditions are strong, particularly in the Kandyan provinces. Caste, temple endowments, national dress, ceremonies, manners and customs, are there maintained as the survivals of the old Sinhalese civilization. *Between the landed castes and the mercantile castes of the low country and the coast there has hitherto been little social intercourse or intermarriage.*"

³ Donoughmore Report, pp. 91-92.

⁴ The reasons can be inferred from this extract: "They (the Tamils) are apprehensive, unduly perhaps, but genuinely of Sinhalese political dominance unchecked on the one side by a disproportionately generous allocation of seats to the Tamil portions of the island and on the other side by the counterpoise of communal representation. If to the Ceylon-Tamils communal representation is of interest mainly as a counterpoise to the numerical preponderance of the Sinhalese to the Muslims and Burghers, it presents itself almost as their only assured safeguard against the risk of political submission." Correspondence regarding the Constitution of Ceylon, op. cit. p. 19. Is the Government of Ceylon without its due interest in counterpoise? The above extracts would seem to indicate that the Tamils, Burghers, and Moslems only are interested in counterpoise. The Government is equally interested in it.

many sought their fortunes in the Straits Settlements and in the Malay States, but educational progress in Malay *has reduced the demand for their services* in that country ¹ Hence they are now spreading gradually into Sinhalese districts, and are to be found all over Ceylon, especially in the *professions* and in *clerical positions*. This means resentment on the part of the Sinhalese against Tamil penetration, and the struggle between the Sinhalese and the Tamils for professions and clerical positions.

The Indian-Tamils number about 700,000. Most of them are employed on the tea and rubber estates at the higher levels where Sinhalese have hitherto been unwilling to work in large numbers. They are also engaged as labourers on Government and municipal projects, or other work in the towns; and are to be found as traders and shopkeepers. An important Government official with a seat in the Legislative Council has the post of the Director of Indian Immigrant Labour, and looks after the welfare and protection of these workers. The Indian Government also has set aside for this purpose a member of their civil service who, at the present time, is an Indian. He resides in Ceylon, and keeps in touch with both the Indian and Ceylon Governments in relation to matters concerning the Indian immigrants ²

The Moslem community number 312,000, of whom 262,000 are descendants of Arab traders settled in Ceylon, 35,000 are descendants of the troops brought from Java by the Dutch. Though small in numbers, it is by reason of its *commercial* and *trading activities* an important element in the population. A considerable number of Moslems are in Colombo, while many are settled throughout the island engaged in shopkeeping and trading. In the Eastern Province there are a few who are engaged in agriculture ³

The Europeans number about 11,000 in all. They consist of *planters, merchants, bankers, and business men, superior artisans* and *members of the public service*. The planters are mostly the employees of limited liability companies at home. They are widely distributed over the area and in the rubber estates in the

¹ Donoughmore Report, p 92

² Donoughmore Report, p 95

³ Donoughmore Report, p 93

interior. They take little part in political affairs like the European business community in India. The general industrial and financial interests are predominantly in European hands, as in India. The capital invested in the country from British sources is very considerable, also as in India.¹

The Burghers are a small but not an unimportant community. They are the descendants of Dutch settlers. They have frequently been prominent in the public and professional life of the island.² The Depressed Classes are found in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.³

We now come to the classes. The Ceylonese movement for responsible government has the same features as the Indian movement. In 1909 the Governor of Ceylon transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies five memorials addressed to him praying for reform of the councils. The memorials came from the Low Country Products Association, the Jaffna Association, the Chilaw Association, and the National Association.⁴ All these were the organizations of the professional, landed, and commercial classes of Ceylon. They all spoke in the name of the Sinhalese nation.⁵ On February 9, 1910, the Governor of

¹ Donoughmore Report pp 97-98

² Donoughmore Report, p 95

³ Donoughmore Report p 96

⁴ *The Low Country Products Association* came into existence in 1907. From its inception it has been purely a native association. Of late it has evinced an inclination to concern itself largely with questions of a wholly political character. Its members are many of them *landed proprietors*.

The Jaffna Association is composed of Tamils resident in Ceylon engaged in *commercial or professional pursuits*.

The Chilaw Association is composed of *commercial and professional native residents* in and around Chilaw.

The National Association, most of whose members are drawn from the professional and commercial classes in the Western Province is a debating society which interests itself largely in local political questions."

Despatches relating to the constitution of the Ceylon Legislative Council 1910, Cd 5098 No 1 p 2

Ibid p 3: "I would further invite your Lordship's attention to the fact that all these memorials emanate not from the people of Ceylon as is claimed by the memorialists, but from certain well defined classes of the native population—classes moreover which represent a very small minority of the whole. I refer to those of the natives of Ceylon who have assimilated an education of a purely western, as opposed to oriental type and who are to be regarded not as representative Ceylonese, but as a product of the European administration of Ceylon on lines approved by British tradition."

⁵ Despatch No 1, op cit. pp 4 22

Ceylon stated that he was taking steps to appoint a commission to consider the changes in the Constitution.¹ As in India, this announcement was followed by a wild rush of petitions and memorials for more representation, complaints of under-representation and prayers for protection. The Planters' Association deprecated the introduction of the elective element and asked to be allowed to nominate as before.² The Jaffna Association pointed out that they were under-represented by the reform proposals.³ This acute struggle among the professional and commercial classes continued till 1917.⁴ In that year the Ceylon Reform League and the Ceylon National Association submitted a memorial to the Secretary of State asking for further reforms. In 1919 the Ceylon National Congress,⁵ representing in the main the Low Country Sinhalese, formulated further demands.⁶ The Secretary of State received further representations at the Colonial Office from the Kandyan Association, the Ceylon National Congress, and the European Association of Ceylon. As a result of this agitation there was passed on August 13, 1920, an Order in Council reconstituting the Legislative Council of fourteen official and twenty-three unofficial members under the presidency of the Governor. Eleven of the unofficial members were to be elected on a territorial basis, and eight others to represent the Europeans (two),

¹ Further correspondence relating to the Constitution of the Ceylon Legislative Council 1910, Cd 5427, No 1, p 1

² Further correspondence, *op cit*, No 2, p 3

³ Further correspondence, *op cit*, No 6, p 4

⁴ Correspondence relating to the further revision of the Constitution of Ceylon, Cmd 1809, p 20 "The Tamils as represented by the Jaffna Association refused to join and co-operate with the Ceylon National Conference held in December 1918 in Colombo as they were afraid that by consenting to unqualified territorial representation they would be swamped by the Sinhalese majority. It was after a letter of assurance (of minor concessions to Tamils) that they joined the reform movement." This is reminiscent of the Moslem and Hindu parley in India.

See for the letter of assurance, *ibid*, pp 23-24

⁵ The Ceylon National Congress developed out of the Ceylon National Conference. Correspondence relating to the further revision of the Constitution of Ceylon, 1923, Cmd 1809, p 20. The Indian National Congress grew also out of the pre-existing associations.

⁶ By telegram from the President of Ceylon National Congress to the Secretary of State dated December 16, 1919. Quoted in Donoughmore Report, p 14

Burghers (one), Chamber of Commerce (one), Low Country Products Association (one), Kandyan (two), and Indians (one). A member to represent the Mohammedan community and three others to represent such interests as in the opinion of the Governor were not adequately provided for otherwise, were to be nominated by him.¹ This was the beginning of the combination of territorial and communal representation in Ceylon.

This Order in Council became the object of struggle between the various sections of the Ceylon professional and commercial classes and the Government of Ceylon. Even before the passing of the Order in Council, the Ceylon National Congress demanded territorial representation.² In 1921 the President of the Ceylon National Congress suggested that members should be elected on a territorial basis, and that the communal and minority representation should be retained with minor alterations.³ The other professional and commercial classes also sent representations of protest to the Secretary of State⁴ even before the Order in Council came into existence.

These representations and protests were considered by the Secretary of State. A further revision of the Constitution was

¹ Donoughmore Report, pp. 13-14.

² By telegram from the Ceylon National Congress Committee to Mr D. B. Jayatilaka dated August 9, 1920. Quoted in Donoughmore Report, p. 15.

³ By a resolution in the Legislative Council. Full details are given in correspondence relating to the further revision of the Constitution of Ceylon, Cmd. 1809 pp. 3-10.

⁴ Memorandum issued by the Ceylon Reform Deputation in further correspondence relating to the revision of the Constitution of Ceylon. Cmd. 1906 (1923), No. 1 p. 5. One feature of the reform scheme of 1920 was that it sought to extend racial representation.

In view of this fact it is most unsatisfactory to find that in the present proposals communal representation has been elevated to the position of the determining principle of reform. We deeply regret this announcement because it is liable to be construed as an attempt on the part of the government to intensify and perpetuate racial differences among the Ceylonese in order to postpone if not prevent their reaching the goal of full responsible government. "The European Association does not share this view."

See No. 2, Memorandum by H. J. Temple of the European Association of Ceylon in further correspondence, Cmd. 1906, pp. 15-16. The Congress Party's charge against the government, that it is deliberately perpetuating racial differences in order to prevent the attainment of self government, is unworthy of the leaders of the Sinhalese.

contemplated Again representations and counter-representations were made The year 1922-1923 were years of acute controversy in Ceylon over the question of communal representation¹ The Congress Party as a whole was against communal representation. The struggle between the Tamil and Sinhalese professional classes became intense

The Tamil Mahajana Sabha² protested that the introduction of the new Constitution was a setback to the Tamils³ They asked that a provision be made for Tamil seats in the Legislative Council equal in number to two-thirds of the Sinhalese seats.⁴ They accepted the principle of territorial representation as a sound one, but they asserted that it had to be modified in a country like Ceylon.⁵ The Ceylon Tamil League⁶ also resented the opposition of the Sinhalese to communal representation⁷

Under the pressure of these acute struggles the Ceylon National Congress came to a private arrangement with certain

¹ Memorandum of the Ceylon Reform Deputation, op cit, pp 5-11

² "Tamils of Ceylon have formed themselves into an Association called the Tamil Mahajana Sabha at a public meeting held in Jaffna on August 15, 1921 attended by leading and representative Tamils from all parts of the Jaffna district as well as from various other parts of the island" Correspondence, op cit, Cmd 1809, p 17 (Enclosure 2 in No 1)

³ Correspondence, op cit (Cmd 1809), p 19

⁴ Correspondence, op cit (Cmd 1809), p 17

⁵ Correspondence, op cit (Cmd 1809), p 19 This is the same reasoning followed by the votaries of communal representation in India

Ibid, p 20 The Jaffna Association sent a memorial to Sir Walter Long, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated January 2, 1918, saying

"that the association was not opposed to the introduction of territorial and communal representation but prayed that by a combination of territorial and communal representation the proportion of Tamil representation should as far as possible be maintained to Sinhalese representation"

⁶ "Now there is no means of ascertaining when, where and under what circumstances the 'Ceylon Tamil League' came into being and who its office bearers are" Further correspondence, Cmd 2062 (1924), p 17 It is one of those mushroom organizations that crop up on the eve of reform for loaves and fishes of office

⁷ Look at the struggle between the Tamil and the Sinhalese professional classes Ceylon Tamil League's telegram No 4

Further correspondence, Cmd 1906, p 20 "The (Tamil) League deplores the opposition to this measure by a certain section of the Sinhalese, who have arrogated to themselves the name of the Ceylon National Congress and profess to speak on behalf of the whole people of Ceylon" The Government of Ceylon could not have used stronger language The Tamil professional classes of Ceylon resemble, in their demands and phraseology, the Moslem professional classes in India

Tamil representatives as to the relative proportion of seats to be allotted to each race in the Legislative Council.¹ This is reminiscent of the Lucknow Pact in India. This eagerness to concede to the demands of the Tamilians was construed by them as meaning that without their co-operation the Sinhalese could not carry out their scheme of political domination and ascendancy.² This cavilling at the Sinhalese professional classes is a veiled competition between the two classes. Unlike the Moslems in India the Tamils are not backward educationally and economically compared to the Sinhalese. Their struggle is one of numerical minority against numerical majority. The Ceylon Tamils were apprehensive that they *would suffer some diminution of their political influence and their prospects of employment in the public service* as a result of electoral redistribution on a strictly numerical basis.³

On the occasion of the last revision of the Constitution a further claim was put forward by the Tamils for a seat in Colombo, known as the Western Province Tamil seat.⁴ This demand was conceded with a clear understanding that it was to be reconsidered on the next revision of the Constitution. This was opposed by the Sinhalese professional classes.⁵ Thus

¹ Donoughmore Report p. 92.

² Memorandum of the Ceylon Tamil Mahajana Sabha on the proposed constitutional reforms in Ceylon contained in the Despatch of the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated January 11, 1923. Enclosure No. 15 in further correspondence, Cmd. 1906 p. 69.

³ Correspondence regarding the Constitution of Ceylon Cmd. 3419 (1929), p. 19.

⁴ The grounds on which they base their claim are flimsy especially in view of the present geographical distribution of Tamils in Ceylon which makes it certain that a substantial number of territorial seats will come to them." Donoughmore Report, p. 93.

The grounds are "Some of the most permanent influential and wealthy Tamils are to be found in the city of Colombo, as landed proprietors, government officers, lawyers, medical men, brokers, shroffs, and in various other capacities including members of the Colombo Chetty Community who are descendants of Tamils settled in the Western Province some centuries ago and have been holding high and responsible positions under the government." Enclosure 2 in No. 1 Correspondence Cmd. 1809 (1923), p. 21.

⁵ Memorandum issued by the Ceylon Reform Deputation, op. cit. p. 10. The reply to the claim of Tamils for Colombo seat is "If a claim for special communal representation can seriously be advanced on such grounds, it can certainly be put forward with equal, and in some instances much greater

formed another bone of contention between the two classes. The more conceded, the more the Tamils in Ceylon and the Moslems in India wanted.

The Council Order of 1923 was a concession to these struggles. It combined territorial and communal representation.¹ Minor modifications were made to it by an amending Order in Council passed on March 21, 1924. This did not satisfy the professional classes. The struggles continued, and it is in the midst of these struggles that the Donoughmore Commission came to Ceylon to consider further revision of the Constitution of Ceylon.

II. DONOUGHMORE REPORT

The origins of the theory of communal representation in Ceylon lie in the growth of professional classes—like the Tamil and the Sinhalese—and British policy. The struggle between the Tamil and the Sinhalese professional and commercial classes is numerically unequal. A recognition of the claims of the Tamils is a concession to them, and at the same time is a counterpoise against the Sinhalese classes. Over and over again the Sinhalese professional and commercial classes accused the

validity, on behalf of the other minority sections in Colombo mentioned above. Whatever be its origin, it is a reactionary effort of the worst type to introduce this piece of localized communalism into the most advanced province in which the circumstances are most favourable for the welding of all sections of the people into one political whole."

The Ceylon National Congress also protested. It resolved "This Congress views with great misgivings and grave concern the reversion to communal representation as the basic principle of the scheme, as undemocratic and calculated to cause disunion among the different communities in the island." Enclosure No. 2. Further correspondence, Cmd 2062, 1924, pp. 5-8.

Ibid, p. 7. Sir Marcus Fernando, member of the Executive Council, remarked on the question of Colombo seat "*It will be introducing an apple of discord into the new Eden* which it was thought the proposed reforms were going to create in Ceylon."

¹ "All persons irrespective of race, resident in any constituency and otherwise qualified will be entitled to vote in that electorate. The separate representation of the Kandyan community has been abolished, but in deference to the urgent demand of the Tamil community provision has been made for the separate representation of Ceylon Tamils resident in the Western Provinces. The maintenance of this representation will be subject to reconsideration on the next revision of the Constitution." No. 4. Further correspondence, Cmd 2062, p. 25.

Ceylon Government of preferences and concessions to the Tamil classes as a counterpoise against them. Sir William Manning played the same role in Ceylon as Morley and Minto did in India. It was this Excellency who obtained for the Tamils the preferential treatment and concessions.¹ By this policy a section of the Tamils has been won over by the Government.²

Like the Government of India, the Government of Ceylon had no intention of introducing responsible government.³ As in India, they declared that their object was to educate these classes in the arts of government and the complexities of public business. As in India, they wished to associate the Ceylonese with the administration of the day. The policy of 'increasing association of natives with the administration' is the much-vaunted British policy both in India and Ceylon. This does not mean that the grant of responsible government was intended. This means a grant of cheap concessions now and then to the educated intelligentsia which would also serve other purposes—strengthening of British paramountcy, and counterpoising one section against another. Concession to the educated Tamil classes means the retention of communal representation which the Sinhalese professional classes resented. It means that the Sinhalese professional classes can be counterpoised by the Tamil ones. It means that British paramountcy can be assured.

¹ *Ceylon Daily News* June 12 1923. Quoted by Ceylon Reform Deputation No. 3. Further correspondence Cmd. 2062 p. 23. On the occasion of his visit to Jaffna, the Tamil section of the population gave him a fitting welcome because he was the one who obtained for them preferential treatment and concessions. Did not Morley receive congratulatory telegrams from the Moslems after he approved of the principle of communal representation?

² Note the policy. "The Governor Sir William H. Manning, in his despatches lays special stress on the numerical superiority of the majority population, emphasizes the existing racial and other differences and eagerly seizes upon every reactionary tendency that has recently manifested itself in the island in support of his recommendations." Further correspondence Cmd. 1906, p. 5 (from the Memorandum of Ceylon Reform Deputation No. 1).

³ The Donoughmore Committee also came to the conclusion 'that the grant of complete responsible government is under present conditions impracticable.' Report p. 32. It finds that prerequisites for responsible government are absent in Ceylon. They are, absence of a party (Report, pp. 41-42) and of public opinion (Report, p. 31). The Joint Committee arrives at the same conclusions with reference to India vol. I, part I para. 20, pp. 11-12.

It is under these conditions that communal representation arose. Masking these real reasons, what are the official reasons given by the Ceylon Government with reference to representation of communities? We will examine these reasons carefully, using the arguments of the Donoughmore Report.

1 Communal representation was devised, so they say, with a view to assisting the development of democratic institutions in countries of different races and religions, and in the hope of eliminating the clash of these various interests during elections. It was expected to provide, peacefully, an effective legislative assembly which would give a fair representation of the different elements in the population, and would also tend to promote unity.¹

Was this object secured? The Donoughmore Report states that the experiment has not given the desired results. It has not helped to develop an uniting bond or link.² It accentuated rather than diminished racial differences.³ This is exactly what is happening in India. Since the avowed object of communal representation is not fulfilled, the retention of communal representation is highly reprehensible.

2 We have noted that the concession of a seat for Tamils in Colombo was opposed by the Sinhalese professional classes. It was conceded, as the Duke of Devonshire stated, on the urgent demands of the Tamils.⁴ The urgent demands were no other than throwing an apple of discord among the classes in Colombo, as stated by Sir Marcus Fernando. The Tamils appealed to the private agreement they had with the Sinhalese. The Donoughmore Commission, after examining the various grounds, came to the conclusion: "Private agreements between races or groups, while worthy of attention, *cannot take precedence of considerations in the interests of the Ceylon people as a whole*."

As a contrast, let us note with what equivocation the Statutory Commission recorded that they had no private agreements to guide them, as Montagu and Chelmsford had in the Lucknow Pact.⁵ The wise words of Donoughmore would have served

¹ Donoughmore Report, pp. 90-91.

² Donoughmore Report, p. 91.

³ Donoughmore Report, p. 42. Cf. Indian Central Committee Report Memorandum of Nair, Khan and Uberoi, p. 110.

⁴ No. 4. Further correspondence, Cmd. 2062, p. 25.

⁵ Donoughmore Report, p. 93.

them well. The Donoughmore Commission saw no reasons for the continuance of communal representation, and in view of the geographical distribution of the Tamil population, saw no necessity for any arbitrary settlement of the relative proportions of Sinhalese and Tamil seats.¹

3 At the time of the visit of the Donoughmore Commission there were three Moslem communal representatives in the Legislative Council. The main ground on which the claim for the representation of Moslems is made is that certain laws and customs of the Moslems, based on their religion, differ from those of the larger communities, and that disabilities in these matters might be imposed by the legislature in the absence of Moslem spokesmen.² This is the official version.

The Moslem representatives themselves who appeared before the Donoughmore Committee admitted that if this occurred it would not be by deliberate intention, but through ignorance or misunderstanding. The Commission suggested that communal representation is least desirable when on a religious basis.³ They suggested that a representative body of Moslems, appointed by themselves to safeguard those special interests which are thought likely to be affected, would be in a position to make representations to the Legislative Council and would almost certainly secure fair and just consideration of any questions at issue. There is little fear of religious intolerance in Ceylon, and therefore the Commission recommended that communal representation for them should cease.⁴

The Commission noted, "the disintegrating effect" of communal representation on the Moslems. In addition to the general Moslem demand for two additional representatives, certain Malay representatives contended in evidence that apart from their religion they had no common interests with the

Donoughmore Report, p 93

² Donoughmore Report, p 93

³ Ibid. p 93 "Religious tolerance is essential in a country with any approach to democratic institutions, and there should be no need for the protection for a particular faith which special representation of that faith in the Legislature implies."

Memorandum of J. H. Temple of the European Association of Ceylon. Further correspondence, Cmd. 1906 (1923), No 2 p 16 "Religion, happily has never been a factor or an influence in politics of Ceylon."

⁴ Donoughmore Report, p 94.

Moors,¹ and that they should be definitely removed from the same compartment of communal representation. They suggested that two of the present seats should go to the Moors and one to the Malays, their point being that communal representation should be on a racial and not on a religious basis. They asked this as a reward for their past services.² The Donoughmore Commission did not analyse the causes of such disintegrating effect on the Moors. This is due to the differentiation of classes of the same faith. The Malay classes³ came into conflict with the Moorish classes. Their demand for separate representation is a veiled struggle between the Moorish and Malay educated and commercial classes, and between town and country.⁴ The Donoughmore Commission thought that it would be better for these classes to merge with the general electorate instead of demanding separate representation.⁵

When once the principle of communal representation was conceded, demands were easily forthcoming. It happened the same way in India. After the Moslems came the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians, and the Depressed Classes—all seeking protection.

4 With reference to the claims of other communities, the Donoughmore Commission dismissed them. The Burghers held two seats in the Council. "*If the Legislature were anxious to oppress the Burghers in any way it would not be prevented by the presence of two Burgher communal representatives*"⁶ This is

¹ Enclosure in No. 9 Further correspondence, Cmd. 1906, pp. 33 ff., 36 (The humble memorial of the Malayas.)

² Enclosure in No. 9 Further correspondence, Cmd. 1906, p. 41.

³ "The claims of the Malays cannot be lightly set aside by saying that there are no leading men amongst them, because the memorialists humbly urge that there are many. They have proportionately a large number of professional men, lawyers, engineers and surveyors, one of the official members of the Legislative Council is a Malay. There are many merchants and well-to-do men of the community all over the island who can easily represent them in the council." Enclosure in No. 9 Further correspondence, Cmd. 1906, p. 40.

⁴ Donoughmore Report, p. 94. "The Muslims of Eastern Province expressed to us their disappointment with their religious communal representatives. These they said had been selected from the trading section of the Moors, and were not familiar with or interested in agriculture, which is the main occupation of the Eastern Province."

⁵ Donoughmore Report, p. 94.

⁶ Donoughmore Report, p. 95.

a wise observation. They suggested that the real safeguards lie in the fairness and common sense of the majority members

They also considered it unnecessary that the Indian communal representatives of the Indian Tamils should retain their seats.¹ It was doubtful whether the objects for which they were given seats were realized.

With reference to the Depressed Classes, they recorded that *the enfranchisement of these people and the provision of equal adequate educational facilities are the true remedies for their condition.*² The Indian Commissions, and the Poona Pact, seem medieval compared to the Donoughmore Commission. The Commission emphasized the remedial aspects of the case rather than mere artificial protection.

With reference to the Europeans the Commission suggested a *via media*. They wanted to retain seats for Europeans, and at the same time not to resort to communal representation.³

5 The Kandyanans desire self-government of the Kandyan Provinces. Although of the same stock, the Kandyan and the Low Country Sinhalese represent two cultures. The struggles between the Kandyan and the Low Country Sinhalese is one between the highland and the lowland, between feudalism and industrialism, between conservative and progressive forces. Three factors intensified the struggle

1 By force of economic pressure the Low Country Sinhalese, Tamils, and Moors are spreading year by year from the thickly-populated maritime districts into the Kandyan hinterland.

2. Those that have arrived have little difficulty in exploiting the unsophisticated Kandyan peasantry

3 The movement for responsible government begins with Low Country Sinhalese. The Kandyanans are fearful that they would have to play a subordinate role.⁴

Masking these real causes of conflict between them and the Low Country Sinhalese, the Kandyanans also brought forward certain other grievances about the denial of legislation for themselves, and so on. As a solution, they put forward a scheme for dividing the island into three self-governing areas (1) the Northern and Eastern Provinces in which the Tamils

¹ Donoughmore Report, pp 95-97

² Donoughmore Report, p 99

³ Donoughmore Report p 97

⁴ Donoughmore Report, p 105

predominate, (2) the Kandyan Provinces, and (3) the Southern and Western Provinces peopled mainly by Low Country Sinhalese. This scheme is reminiscent of redistribution of provinces in India, especially in Punjab and Sind. The Commission rejected this claim on the ground that increased facilities of education and encouragement of measures of local government would better further their interests than an artificial redistribution of the island ¹

The Donoughmore Commission showed more wisdom in this respect than all the Indian Commissions. They brushed aside all the official reasons given for the retention of communal representation which, it reported, prevented the development of friendly relations. They said that communal representation "tends to keep communities apart, and to send communal representatives to the council with the idea of defending particular interests instead of giving their special contribution to the common weal." They found that not only did those who already had communal seats desire that the number of these should be increased, but also that a number of other communities, religions, castes, and special interests, not at present represented, came before them claiming that it was necessary for them to have seats in the Legislative Council, and that they were as much entitled to that privilege as those who already possessed it. This is what is happening in India. Their investigations showed that the desire for communal representation was increasing rather than dying. For these reasons they recommended the abolition of communal representation ²

An appreciable majority of the legislative councillors agreed with the Donoughmore Report. The Governor of Ceylon, after

¹ Donoughmore Report, pp. 103-8. Originally representation was given to Kandyan community on account of backward political education. Before the Commission came the Duke of Devonshire abolished separate representation for Kandyans. No. 4 in further correspondence, Cmd. 2062, p. 25.

² Donoughmore Report, pp. 99-100.

Ibid., p. 99. "Only by its abolition will it be possible for the various diverse communities to develop together a true national unity."

See also p. 106. "It is precisely for this reason that we have urged the abolition of the present system of communal representation which has exercised an influence on society wholly pernicious in that it has created an ever-widening breach between communities and has tended to obscure the national interests in the clash of rival races or religions."

recounting the local controversy on this recommendation of the abolition of communal representation, endorsed the views of the Donoughmore Commission.¹ The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Passfield, accepted the recommendations of the Special Commission that all separate communal representation should be abolished.² What a happy coincidence—a Commission, a Legislative Council, a Governor, and a Secretary of State for the Colonies all agreed that communal representation should be abolished in Ceylon. The new Constitution of Ceylon without the principle of communal representation came into existence in 1931. The Ceylon experiment has been so far a success,³ although the Tamils of the north staged a futile Gandhian non-co-operation scene on the Island of Ceylon.

With the proposed changes in the constitution of Ceylon today the communal frogs are croaking louder. On the eve of reforms, as in India, they croak loudest. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference raised again its fifty-fifty slogan. It is unreasoned and unreasonable. The major Ceylon Tamil minority wants 50 per cent out of the 50 per cent demanded for all minorities. If the other minorities demand a similar proportion, what kind of mathematics would it be? Like all communal organizations, the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference assumes to speak and act on behalf of all Ceylon Tamils. It is hardly justifiable. Dr. E. V. Ratnam, himself a Ceylon-Tamil, condemns this communalism strongly. His speech is worth quoting.

"The central theme in Ceylon's political tragedy of the present day can be summed up in one word *careerism*. Generally speaking, men seek election as members of the State Council, both in the North and in the South of Ceylon, *not* because they have a call to serve their country, but because they

¹ Correspondence regarding the Constitution of Ceylon, 1929. Cmd. 3419 p. 21. I am fully conscious of the strength of the feeling against abolition and I do not regard that feeling as factitious or negligible. But notwithstanding some solicitude on this account, I find myself in agreement with the commissioners and I do not recommend that provision for any communal representation should be prescribed in the new Constitution."

² Despatch dated October 10, 1929 in correspondence op cit., Cmd. 3419 p. 52.

³ Cf. T. Reid, "The Ceylon Experiment" (*Political Quarterly* April, June 1935, vol. vi, no. 2 p. 237).

want kudos and careers for themselves and jobs for their relations, friends, and political agents. The general body of voters are used as mere footstools on which the ambitious rich or the ambitious 'family-connected,' who have no other outlet for their ambitions, can assert themselves . . . If the careerist ambitions of one section of members are thwarted by the careerist ambitions of another, why, there are the ready-made slogans for the credulous ignorant "The Sinhalese are communally minded." "The Goigamas are caste-ridden" "The Tamils are clannish." Have the best of our people, the Sinhalese or the Tamils, got together to plan out the path to freedom for an enslaved Ceylon? Are we not allowing careerism and its corollary, communalism, to make the chain of our subjection, political and economic, stronger and stronger?

"I have on a previous occasion stated that in Ceylon today there is room only for two parties. the exploiters and the exploited, the Non-Ceylonese and the Ceylonese. As a Ceylon Tamil I feel that all Ceylonese minorities who look to no country but Ceylon as their home and motherland will be committing both economic and political suicide if they seek to achieve their political aspirations with the assistance of Non-Ceylonese. 'Selfishness can never lead to Swaraj. . . .'¹ Wise words. If the words "imperialists," "capitalists," and "feudalists" are substituted for the word "Non-Ceylonese" it would be still better. The Indian must learn, mark, and inwardly digest these words of Ratnam. The way to Swaraj lies in the struggle against imperialism.

A Ceylonese Moslem also raised his voice against communal representation. Sir Mackan Marikar, first Moslem knight, Minister of Communications and Works in the first State Council, leader of the Moslems in Ceylon, said. "Ceylon should be ruled by the Sinhalese. The Sinhalese are not so foolish as to refuse the demands of the minorities if they are reasonable." Mr. Jinnah, here is something for you to think about.

III. COMPARISON. INDIA AND CEYLON. CONCLUSIONS

The problem of communal representation ran a similar course in Ceylon and in India, the only difference being that

¹ *Ceylon News*, Colombo, Monday, July 11, 1938, vol. 1, No. 17, p. 13

in Ceylon it came to an end while in India it is still existing. It was an Order in Council that brought communal representation into being in Ceylon, and it was an Order in Council that took it away. In both places the origins are to be sought in the growth of the professional and commercial classes and their desire for a share in the administration of the country, and in the need of the Governments to counterpoise one class against another. In both places it was asserted, by their respective Governments, that they were not fit for responsible government. In both cases the original idea of representation of interests was changed to representation of communities, not in the historical sense, but in the religious sense. In both cases, while responsible government was denied, the natural course left open was to concede small administrative changes coupled with counterpoises. Moslems were counterpoised against Hindus in India. Tamils were counterpoised against Sinhalese in Ceylon. In both cases, when once the principle of communal representation was recognized, it was spread to other communities. Partly was it due to the differentiation of classes, partly to the British policy of counterpoise. In India it spread to Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, Christians, and Untouchables. In Ceylon it spread to Malays. In both cases, as the communities were given more representation, they clamoured for more. Above all, the ostensible objects for which communal representation was sought by the professional classes were not secured. Communal representation disintegrated and demoralized the society into a cockpit of creeds and castes. It coloured their outlook on life with communalism. It hindered the growth of party feeling.¹ It encouraged religious parochialism. It accentuated rather than diminished racial differences.

But there are differences as well. In Ceylon the antagonism between the classes was not expressed religiously. The Tamils, the Low Country Sinhalese, and the Kandyan all belong to the

¹ Cf. "It is argued in some quarters that the absence of political parties in Ceylon is due to the denial of responsibility to the unofficial members of the council and that the grant of responsibility would result in the immediate development of a party system. (While) the argument is not without substance." Donoughmore Report p. 42. This is also due to the grouping of communities and interests in councils without an attempt to "reconcile" interests.

Hindu and Buddhist faiths In spite of minor changes in both faiths, their religious outlook is not much different. Hence they do not have to fall back upon a ready-made religion to back up their demands Outside these communities, the Moors and Malays are few in number. Even the Malays appealed for protection in the name of their past services and not in the name of religion They contended that representation should be on racial and not on religious lines

The Sinhalese leaders—the Ceylon National Congress—showed tact and wisdom They were at no time doctrinaire in their opposition to communal representation.¹ They were not without other considerations in their moderation They conceded the claims of minorities They admitted the claims of Kandyan They went far enough to concede to the Tamils It is only when they demanded a Colombo seat that the Sinhalese put up a spirited resistance It is to a certain extent true in India, too The Hindu professional classes conceded to the Moslems in order to get their support But they demanded more The reaction was expressed in the Hindu Maha Sabha, which paradoxically is the only conservative reactionary organization that stands against communal representation With the advent of Gandhism, the differentiation of the Hindu professional classes became more pronounced With all this differentiation, Gandhi still occupies the field with one leg in the Congress and the other in the Sabha Excepting the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Congress is vague in its attitude towards communal representation In this they are different from Sinhalese leaders

The Sinhalese in their agitation against communal representation advanced the idea that the policy of the Government is a policy of counterpoise² They advanced the idea that “no

¹ “It must not be supposed for a moment that we oppose this proposal merely on academic grounds” No 3, Memorandum of Ceylon Reform Deputation in further correspondence, Cmd 2062, p 14

² “In fact, the governor’s recommendations and the reasons with which he supports them offer plain encouragement to each section of the community to go on fighting for its own advantage Furthermore, they invite the minorities to regard the possible predominance in the Legislative Council of representatives belonging to the majority population, namely the Sinhalese, as a latent source of danger against which they must combine for their own safety. . . The whole scheme it propounds thus resolves itself

one has yet proved that any section of the country, whether European or Ceylonese, has any interests which are adverse to or inconsistent with those of the other sections of the people."¹ This idea, stated without qualifications, is full of loopholes. As the Government of Ceylon is at present constituted, the interests of the European not only differ from those of the Ceylonese, but do come into conflict with them. The Sinhalese leaders stated that "differing interests" need not mean adverse or conflicting interests. It would have been better if they stated that not all different interests mean adverse or conflicting interests. The interests of the Sinhalese professional classes not only differ from those of the Sinhalese workers, but also come into conflict with them. But in their joint struggles against imperialism they can work together. What the Sinhalese leaders mean by this idea is, that no minority community can show, as the Government of Ceylon is at present constituted, that its interests would be endangered by the majority community. The same is true in India. *No community which has asked for separate representation can show, or did show, that it has been treated badly by other communities.*

The Sinhalese professional classes were not equivocal like the Indian professional classes. They perceived the theoretical objections to communal representation, and always stood against it, but in practice they conceded a few modifications. The Indian professional classes, like their masters, never accounted for the gap between their theoretical objections to communal representation and their actual demand for it in practice. The Sinhalese professional classes, who were the first to organize into the Ceylon National Congress, belong themselves to the Low Country Sinhalese. They belong to one community, one faith, and one region. As such they represent a unity in thought as well as in action. It is true that the Kandyan

into an attempt to establish a 'balance of power' based upon no principle but devised for the avowed purpose of preventing the possible predominance of Sinhalese territorial representatives in the Legislative Council which contingency for some unexplained reason, is regarded as a dreadful evil to be averted even at the cost of justice and fair play" No. 1 Memorandum by the Ceylon Reform Deputation in further correspondence Cmd. 1906 pp. 6, 7

¹ No. 3 Ceylon Reform Deputation in further correspondence Cmd. 2062 p. 12.

question is one of numbers, and one of purchase of loyalty, and good behaviour. At times it is necessary to purchase the loyalty of the larger number by a timely concession. The abolition of communal representation is such a timely concession to the numerical majority. The Sinhalese professional and commercial classes are no more extremists than their brethren in India. Such a concession did not impair British paramountcy in Ceylon. It is also timely in view of the unrest and disturbances in India. External considerations have always shaped British policy in matters of concession. Therefore the abolition of communal representation is no surrender of the essential postulates of British policy in Ceylon.

Communal Representation in Kenya

THE Donoughmore Commission wisely observed that one of the most difficult problems in connection with the formation or alteration of constitutions for the various overseas countries of the Empire is that of communal representation ¹ In Kenya² an acute controversy arose on this question It had its origin

¹ Donoughmore Report, p 90

The Statutory Commission also spoke of the difficulty of the problem, vol 11, p 59 ("very thorny question") But its recommendations were different from those of Donoughmore and Hilton Young Commissions The problem exists in other parts of the Empire in some shape or other In the discussions on Ceylon many references were made to Jamaica and West Indies Josiah Wedgwood referred to the question of Kaffir opposition to communal representation in South Africa (Joint Committee, Minutes of Evidence, vol 11 A, p 128)

Joint Committee, vol 11 A, p 138 Wedgwood "I am quite aware of communal representation in the Commonwealth of New Zealand It is a very bad communal problem The coloured peoples have a separate electorate and 3 of them are elected They have not much influence in a council which consists of 100 members "

Ibid., p 336 "Do you know that in another very important Asiatic colony of European powers, namely, Java, which has a political problem amazingly similar to that of India, there is also a system of communal electorates?" (Ghuzzavani)

Sir Anton Bertram, *The Colonial Service*, Cambridge, 1930, pp 169-72, for communal representation in Cyprus, Kenya, Ceylon, and Fiji

Ibid, p 172 "In the new Fiji Constitution which came into operation on May 1, 1927, the representation is communal The elements of the population apart from the officials are the European planters and traders, the Indian immigrants, and the native Fijians The Indian community at first accepted the new Constitution and three Indian members were duly elected But on November 5, 1929, the Indian members demanded a common electoral roll for all British subjects, and upon a resolution to this effect being rejected, resigned their seats "

² For area and population, see Report of the East Africa Commission, Cmd 2387, 1925, p 148 Area 245,060 square miles Population Europeans, 10,295, Asiatics, 23,470, Natives, 2,495,065

Hilton Young Report, pp 21, 25 Total Europeans, 12,529, Arabs, 10,557, Indians, 26,759, Other races, 3,824 Of the other races the most important are the Goans, Baluchis, and Seychellois The Arab community is represented in the Legislative Council (p 26)

in the exclusion of the Indians¹ from the franchise granted to the Europeans in 1919. The protests of the Indians in Kenya at this exclusion were strongly supported by public opinion in India. The Wood-Winterton Report recommended qualifications for the franchise which would approximately result in a 10 per cent Indian electorate.² Out of eleven elected members, seven were to be Europeans and four Indians. The India Office suggested a modification. The Government of India was willing to accept the scheme, although it did not consider that it fully met the claims put forward on behalf of the Indians. The Government of Kenya rejected the scheme, mainly on the ground that it gave no sufficient safeguard to the European community against Indian predominance³ in the future. Further attempts to secure agreement were unsuccessful, mainly owing to the opposition of the European community.

In July 1923 His Majesty's Government decided that the interests of all concerned in Kenya would best be served by the adoption of a communal system of representation. Under this decision provision was made for five elected Indian members on the council as against eleven elected Europeans, and the number of official members was fixed so as to maintain an official majority. This decision did not prove acceptable to the Indian community, and only one candidate came forward for election. The remaining four vacancies were, until recently, filled by nomination.⁴

¹ For a brief account of the Indian community in Kenya, see Hilton Young Report, pp 26-31. See also Marjorie Ruth Dilley *British Policy in Kenya*, Nelson, New York, 1937 pp 141-78 ff.

² It also suggested a common electoral roll for all British subjects and British protected persons (male or female) aged 21 years and upwards. Hilton Young Report p 204.

³ By the way as the Hilton Young Report puts it, p 27. It will thus be seen that in the economic organization of the Eastern African territories the Indian, both as trader and as artisan, occupies an intermediate position between the European and the African. "Numerically the Indian is twice the number of the European."

⁴ Hilton Young Report, pp 205-6.

Joint Committee, vol. II A., Minutes of Evidence.

J. C. Wedgwood, pp 127-8. I would ask the Committee to observe that the Indians in East Africa for the last ten years have been determinedly fighting against communal electorates both *Mohammedan* and *Hindu*. The one thing on which they have been solid was that they were not going into a constitution in Kenya which should leave the Indians voting on an Indian

Matters were at this stage when the Hilton Young Commission examined the question

The Indians did not claim representation in proportion to their numbers. What they asked for was effective representation of their interests and equality of political status. Their main objection to communal representation was that in their view it conveyed the implication that they were inferior to the white immigrant, and was, therefore, galling to their self-respect. In order to remove this implication they were prepared to accept the proposal in the Wood-Winterton Report to admit not more than one-tenth of their members to the franchise. They said that they did not seek political domination, but the recognition of their right as British subjects within the British Empire. They contended that their position in Kenya was inconsistent with the resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1921. The resolution referred to is.

"The conference recognizes that there is an incongruity between the position of India as an equal member of the British Empire and the existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some other parts of the Empire. The conference is accordingly of opinion that, in the interests of the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, it is desirable that the rights of such Indians to citizenship should be recognized."¹

The European opposition was based on the ground that a limitation of the strength of the Asiatic vote was a safeguard of their interests. They were afraid of their interests and institutions passing into the hands of another race.

The Hilton Young Commission reviewed the arguments for and against communal representation from the standpoint of British policy in Africa. Their policy was declared to be the dual policy, the complementary policy of developing the

roll and the Europeans voting on a European roll. So strongly did they feel on it that they have never up to the last year or two elected people. They have refused the representation given to them."

Cf. the statement of the Secretary of State for Colonies, Cmd 2906 (1927), p. 6. "It is satisfactory to record that the Indian community in this colony have *now* decided to participate in the elections to the Legislative Council on the basis of a common roll."

¹ Hilton Young Report, p. 296

native and non native communities¹ This policy, in spite of paper declarations, is no other than the policy of maintaining British paramountcy

Three arguments were advanced in favour of communal representation

I It is maintained that it is best suited to the actual facts of the situation. The immigrant communities of Kenya are at different stages of political development. Although the economic interests of the three communities are intermingled, their political ideas based upon religious and racial differences of mind and temperament with their consequent linguistic and social barriers are not mingled, but are peculiar to each community²

This argument is unsound. Different stages of political development cannot be equalized by communal representation. The remedy lies in removing the causes for such different stages rather than giving artificial protection.

¹ The dual policy was recommended by the Conference of East African Governors. The essential principle involved in the acceptance of the "dual policy" is that native interests must be regarded as an end in themselves, i.e. that the natives cannot be treated as a mere accessory to the immigrant communities. In the White Paper of 1923 (Cmd. 1922) it was laid down that primarily Kenya is an African territory and that His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail. These principles have been reaffirmed in the White Paper of 1927 (Cmd. 2904, p. 2).

Hilton Young Report, pp. 36-37 This Commission gives a limited interpretation to this wording. It tries to reconcile the wording of 1927 with that of 1923, which says that obviously "the interests of the other communities European, Indian, and Arab must severally be safeguarded. If the two statements are to be harmonized one can only conclude that native interests are not intended to prevail to the extent of destroying the interests of immigrant communities already established and that their paramountcy must be subject to this limiting condition" (p. 40)

Ibid., p. 207 The cat is further let out of the bag when the Commission says: "According to this principle the British Government must retain responsibility both for the advancement of native interests and for holding the scales of justice between the various racial communities and if our view is accepted that in order to discharge these responsibilities the ultimate authority must be retained in the hands of the Imperial Government"

So all this talk of dual policy means nothing but "the maintenance of British paramountcy" Native paramountcy is what British paramountcy—legal and economic—thinks it is. See Dilley 1937 pp. 179-208

Hilton Young Report p. 207

2 It is held that the complete abolition of the communal system might involve grave risks in the present state of racial feeling in Kenya ¹

The same argument was advanced in Ceylon and in India. With increasing educational and economic facilities and a firm maintenance of law and order, racial outbursts can easily be controlled, but not until and without a break with imperialism.

3. The present numerical preponderance of the Indian community and the possibility of its increase awakens the apprehensions of the European community lest in the course of time political control in Kenya may pass to a predominantly Indian electorate, and then on the same principle to an electorate in which the majority of voters are native ²

This argument is equally stupid and far-fetched. As long as there is British paramountcy in Kenya, the numerical majority of any community in the council is of no avail. Nothing short of an Africa-wide revolution will ever place power into the hands of the Africans in Kenya. Until that day comes, the fears of the European community are unfounded. If political control passes to a native electorate, is it not within the declarations of the White Papers apart from the interpretations of the Hilton Young Commission? Why should it not pass to a native electorate? If the native interests were to prevail, control ought and would ultimately pass to a native electorate.

"It is argued, on the other hand, that the communal system offers little room for political progress. *While securing the representations of different interests it does little to reconcile them.* It tends rather to promote the election of men of extreme views who will emphasize the differences. The different communities in Kenya can only attain to healthy political life if they learn to compose their differences and seek the common good. *The surest foundation for a stable constitution is community of interests rather than a nice adjustment of opposing forces.* The communal system where it has been tried has tended to accentuate differences and prevent the growth of a healthy political life. *The determining consideration in a sound political system*

¹ Hilton Young Report, pp 207-8

² Ibid, p 208

should not be the immediate interests of particular communities, but the ultimate good of the whole territory"¹

With these words, however much we disagree with their theory of interests, recalling to mind the Donoughmore Commission, the Hilton Young Commission recommended the abolition of communal representation and suggested a common roll.²

This recommendation, apart from the triumph of the view against communal representation, has no political value. The passing of political control to the Indian or the African electorate, unless a revolution takes place meanwhile, is a remote possibility. By accepting or rejecting this recommendation British paramountcy in Kenya is not impaired. At the same time it passes for a concession to the Indian intelligentsia. The Indian movement in East Africa is part and parcel of the one in India, and is sponsored, organized, and financed by that movement. Naturally, a concession to the Indian in East Africa is also a concession to the Indian in India.

The Indian movement, generally speaking, stood for communal representation in India, but against it in Kenya. The contradiction is explained if the underlying causes are noted, which are in India, as we have observed already, a desire for political importance and prospects of posts and emoluments. These can be secured by pressing for communal representation, a sort of artificial protection. These can be secured in Kenya only by abolition of communal representation, a sort of free trade protection. The desire for political importance and posts took the form of retention of communal representation in India and the abolition of it in Kenya.

It would be profitable to study the problem in other parts of the Empire. Much material is not available. But this conclusion is inescapable. Wherever it has been tried it has been

Hilton Young Report, p. 208

Hilton Young Report, p. 210. Our view is that, inasmuch as the progress of the territory must depend on co-operation between the races, the ideal to be aimed at is a *common roll on an equal franchise with no discrimination between the races*. The chairman dissented from this. We are not concerned here with the subsequent history of communal representation in Kenya. Suffice it to say that the system prevails in Kenya today. The present British talk of making Kenya an asylum for Jewish refugees is not without a counterpoise interest.

found to intensify rather than to minimize communal conflict¹ Therefore the only solution is its abolition

These weighty colonial recommendations were ignored by the Indian commissions. They were brought to the attention of the Joint Committee² by Wedgwood, and to the Statutory Commission by an Indian member.³ But nothing came out of these representations, and communal representation came to stay in India.

¹ See R Emerson, *Malaysia A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, Macmillan, New York, 1937, p 296

² Joint Committee, Minutes of Evidence, vol II A, pp 126-28, 334

³ Appendix C G N Mazumdar, Minutes of Dissent, Statutory Commission, vol III, pp 77-78

Counterpoise, Coercion, and Class Struggles in Palestine

THE question of the establishment of a Legislative Council in Palestine is intimately connected with the introduction of communal representation. In 1930 His Majesty's Government, reviving the proposals of 1922, announced that a Legislative Council would be established in Palestine. By 1935 the proposal had taken a definitive shape, and was announced to the Arab and Jewish leaders on December 22, 1935. The Jewish and Arab leaders rejected it uncompromisingly. The Arab leaders in particular demanded a democratic and not a communal Government.

Briefly the proposal is this. The Legislative Council will consist of 28 members: 5 official, 11 nominated unofficial, and 12 elected. Of the 12 elected, 8 are to be Arabs, 3 Jews, and 1 Christian. Of the 11 nominated, 3 are to be Arabs, 4 Jews, 2 Christians, and 2 Commercial.

The proposals were as usual without purpose debated in both Houses of Parliament in the early months of 1937. The Government invited the Arab and the Jewish leaders to discuss these proposals. The Arabs decided to call a general strike until their demands were conceded. The strike movement spread rapidly, and it was during this period of the struggles that the Royal Commission was sent to Palestine.

In spite of the experience of communal representation in other parts of the Empire, the British dared to introduce this principle in Palestine in addition to planting Zionism and postponing independence to infinity.

It is not without any justification that Palestine is called a miniature India. By the introduction of the principle of communal representation in the Council, imperialism desired to set the Jews against the Arabs and the Christians. This move was opposed by the Arabs, and the Jews for different reasons.

The Arabs rejected it on democratic grounds. The Zionists rejected it on the ground that they did not get enough seats. The result is that the very idea of the Council is now dropped. A. B. Keith writes. "Is it really tolerable that so important a territory as Palestine should be denied a Council and placed on level with Somaliland, St. Helena, and Gibraltar? Are the wishes of some 825,000 Moslems and 100,000 Christians to be wholly ignored at the bidding of 320,000 Jews? Or is a Council to be withheld until immigration swamps the Arabs' population, and political domination is transferred to the Jews?"¹ At present imperialism governs Palestine by terror.

Palestine illustrates the same characteristics of British policy as in India, Ceylon, and Kenya.

In order to obtain Arab support in the War the British Government in 1915 promised the Arabs independence. In order to obtain the support of the world Jewry the British Government in 1917 issued the Balfour Declaration. Both these declarations are verbal concessions. The promise of Arab independence is yet to be redeemed. A home for the Jewish people in Palestine, although in motion, is yet to be realized. Ambiguity, uncertainty, and vagueness are characteristics of these verbal concessions. Yet by these very phrases the Arabs and the Jews were pacified temporarily by imperialism until discovery of its perfidy. At the bottom of every concession lies hidden the hand of counterpoise. The Balfour Declaration was a counterpoise against the national liberation movement of the Arabs. With this discovery began the outbreaks of the so-called disorders in 1920, 1921, 1925, 1929, 1933, 1936, and 1938. The underlying causes of these disturbances was the desire of the Arabs for national independence and their hatred and fear of the establishment of the national home for the Jews in Palestine. The Jewish witnesses before the Royal Commission on Palestine also agreed that the underlying causes of these disturbances are political.² One witness even told the Commission that the main cause of the disturbances was British imperialism.³ They were

¹ A. B. Keith, quoted in *Palestine and Transjordan*, June 13, 1936.
T. Canaan, *The Palestine Arab Cause*, Jerusalem, 1936, p. 22.

² Royal Commission on Palestine, Cmd. 5479, London, 1937, p. 110.

³ Minutes of Evidence, Colonial No. 134, 1937, p. 285.

the same underlying causes as those which brought about the previous disturbances.¹ The Commission observed "we cannot both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home."² The plantation of Zionism in Palestine as an offset against Arab nationalism was the same as the plantation of the Orange colony in Ireland. Zionism, like communalism in India, was made dependent on imperialism.

This dependence on imperialism is openly acknowledged by Lord Melchett. "It is enormously to the interests of the British Empire and the people of Great Britain to implant in Palestine a population which will be bound to them by every conceivable human tie." If such population were Jewish they would be bound to Britain by ties of gratitude. By living in the midst of Arabs the Jewish "adherence to the imperial complex would be a prime necessity of self preservation." "If the Empire could rally an army of 50,000 Europeans (Jews) at this vital point what a different outlook, what a change in the balance of power."³

Having skilfully created the problem in Palestine, the British would now say "Now more than ever is the need for our sway in Palestine to hold the scales even." In fact the Royal Commission on Palestine said "The Government of Palestine is of the crown-colony type unsuitable in normal circumstances for governing educated Arabs or democratic Jews. But it cannot evolve as it has elsewhere evolved, into a system of self-government, since there is no such system which would ensure justice both to the Arabs and to the Jews, or in which both the Arabs and the Jews would agree to participate. The establishment of a Legislative Council, or even of an enlarged Advisory Council in which both races would co-operate, is impracticable. Nor are other methods of consultation and collaboration with the representatives of both races feasible. Thus a bureaucratic Government must continue in being unmodified by any representative institutions on a national scale and unable to dispel the conflicting grievances of the dissatisfied and irresponsible communities it governs." The Joint Committee

¹ Commission, p. 111

² Commission, p. 371

³ Lord Melchett, *Thy Neighbour* Kinsey New York, 1937 p. 201

⁴ Palestine Commission Report, pp. 372-73

report on India said the same thing You create the problem You set at loggerheads two communities You tell them they are no good to govern themselves. You stand and say, "We are here on a composing mission on the basis of steadfast maintenance of our supremacy " This is the policy of British imperialism in Palestine

The proposal of the Legislative Council is shelved again as in 1922 Nay the matter does not rest with that Denial of responsible government is not enough Establishment of an irresponsible bureaucracy is not enough The bedrock of every concession and counterpoise must be the maintenance and strengthening of paramountcy. The Commission reports "In these circumstances we are convinced that peace, order, and good government can only be maintained in Palestine for any length of time *by a rigorous system of repression.*"¹ We have experience of this in India

The Arab-Jew problem, like the Hindu-Moslem problem, is neither racial nor religious It is a struggle between two classes belonging to different faiths accentuated by the political policy of British imperialism The class structure of the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine is an important index to their struggles While the Jews are less than one-fifth of the total population, they include more than half the lawyers, doctors, and engineers The Jewish commercial classes represent the unsheltered sector of capital The Jewish Council is a galaxy of middle-class intellectuals, professional and commercial classes, and the prosperous section of Jewish labour The members of the Arab executive belong mainly to the landowning and professional classes The lawyers provide most of the leaders of nationalist agitation The struggle of interests between the Arab and the Jewish professional classes, between the Arab and the Jewish Chambers of Commerce, between Arab and Jewish labour, the continued purchase of Arab land by Jews, above all the incompatibility of Arab independence with Zionism were the major factors in the Palestine disturbances. The Histadruth is a hindrance to labour unity. Ben Guryon, the middle-class labour leader, said "The struggle for pure Jewish labour is the class struggle " "It is unthinkable for a Jew to

¹ Palestine Commission Report, p 373

employ Arabs." It is significant that the first three outbreaks were directed only against the Jews, the last two but one against the Government as well.¹ The present one is against the Government and the Revisionists.

The political policy of British imperialism aggravated the problem by unequal treatment of the classes. The inequality of opportunity enjoyed by Arabs and Jews in putting their case before the British was one of the subsidiary causes of the disturbances in Palestine.² This inequality in another sphere was also noted by the Simpson Report. The Jewish settlers have had every advantage that capital, science, and organization could give them. The Arabs have none of these advantages, and have received practically no help to improve their cultivation. The administration did not ensure this equality. The position of the Arabs was thus prejudiced.³ The Palestine Commissioners heard many witnesses speak to the effect that *favouritism of now one and now another was another cause of the disturbances*.⁴ It resolves into this. The absence of equality of opportunity between the Arab and Jewish classes fostered by imperialism is one of the causes of their struggles.⁵

PARALLEL BETWEEN ZIONISM AND COMMUNALISM

Zionism, like communalism, is dependent on imperialism. Imperialism utilizes and intensifies the class struggles between the Arab and the Jew as in India between the Hindu and the Moslem. As in India, it utilizes the reactionary elements on both sides for its own ends. The Arab struggle for independence is a struggle against Zionism and imperialism. The struggle is indivisible. Their present demand for a democratic government is a demand for the cessation of the policy of counterpoise.

Not all Jews are Zionists. Not all Hindus and Moslems are communalists. In the Arab movement for national liberation

¹ Palestine Commission Report, p. 371.

² Palestine Commission Report, p. 111.

³ Palestine Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development, by Sir John Hope Simpson, Cmd. 3686, London, 1930, p. 142.

⁴ Colonial Minutes of Evidence, No. 134.

⁵ Palestine Commission Report, p. 112.

are found Christians and Jews. In the Indian movement for liberation are Moslems as well. The cleavage is not on racial or religious lines. It is on definite political lines based on class interests. It is this struggle that is known as the Arab-Jew problem in Palestine, and the Hindu-Moslem problem in India.

In both cases the first requisite for their liberation is that they should cease to depend on imperialism. Imperialism must be destroyed. Only when imperialism and its reactionary allies are overthrown can the Arabs and the Jews, the Hindus and the Moslems, solve their problems democratically.

Part IV

An Estimate of the Hindu-Moslem Problem

I

Introduction

We now come to the end of the history. It is now clear that the history of communal representation is the history of British policy in India. It is also one of the growth and diversity of middle-class consciousness in India, and of the demands of the middle class for political power. The introduction of communal representation is not, as it is alleged, an inherent necessity of the situation.¹ It is an instance of the principle that when "an ancient error" is established it works out with its own laws of development. Nor could it be doubted that it is introduced into Indian politics as a matter of policy.²

We have noted that in the early stages of the history of communal representation the Government's official view was that the backward communities should be protected. In the later stages we note that in view of the alleged age-long feud between Hindus and Moslems and other communities it held the view that communal representation was necessary and inevitable. We have also seen that the real reason for such advocacy of communal representation was the need for a policy of counterpoise. "It would, of course, be stupid," wrote Ralph Fox, "to attribute all communal difficulties entirely to British imperialism"

But British imperialism is one aspect of the problem. The social economy of the country is another. The question of the causes of the tension between the people of the same class but of different faiths is not formulated. The formulation of a

¹ L. S. Amery *The Forward View* London, 1935 p. 223.

² For an opposite view see An Indian Student of Political Science, *The Key to Freedom and Security in India*, London, 1933, with a foreword by Arnold Toynbee, p. 66 "It is generally believed that the principle of separate communal representation was introduced into Indian politics recently as a matter of policy and that it has ever since proved a veritable apple of discord. But as a matter of fact it has grown up naturally and inevitably from the conditions inherent in the Indian situation."

question is its solution. The Government of India in its memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission on communal disorders writes:

“No attempt is made to investigate historical origins, or to examine and assess the underlying motives which might be held to have influenced or to be influencing, the ebb and flow of the rivalries and contentions of the two communities ”¹

Yet it gave a chronological hash of fifteen pages describing communal disorders ² In this the Government of India is guilty of a twofold deliberate evasion It avoided formulation of the question It thereby avoided solution This further strengthens the conclusion that its only interest in the communal problem is to seek a source for a policy of counterpoise It also gives the impression that communal disorders break out in India for no reason whatsoever The same deliberate evasion is to be noted in its record of the Mopla Rebellion It described with great gusto the Mopla Rebellion without, in any way, troubling to enquire into the causes. It did not say a word about the relations between the Hindus and the Moplas in Malabar, although it stated that the main brunt of Mopla ferocity was borne not by the Government, but by the luckless Hindus who constituted the majority of the population ³ Here, again, is a deliberate evasion of the formulation of the question.

¹ Indian Statutory Commission, vol iv, p 96

² Ibid , pp 96-120

³ *India, 1921-22*, pp 18-20, 73-75

The Mopla Rebellion

1921

WHAT is the Mopla Rebellion? The use of the word "Rebellion" by the Government is significant.¹ It is ridiculous to call it a rebellion. Was not the greatest disturbance in the West Indies ridiculously called the Jamaica Rebellion?

The Madras Government is guilty of the same evasion as the Government of India. In its memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission it gave a tabular statement of communal disorders and an account of the Mopla Rebellion without one word of explanation.² The Bombay Government was somewhat equivocal. It reported "The culminating spark was the Mopla Rebellion, which was in certain quarters alleged to be due to the oppression of their Hindu landlords and the forcible conversion of Hindus by Moplas." It left it at that, without evaluating this alleged statement.

The Mopla Rebellion was in the main a movement of Moplas against the Hindu moneylenders and landlords, and against the Government. A great majority of them are poor and almost entirely without any substantial property either in lands or goods. They are mostly laborious tenants. Their families are large. Their customs of inheritance provide for the distribution of property among wives, sons, and daughters. Consequently if some Mopla were to accumulate a considerable

¹ *Malabar and the Moplas*: A leaflet issued by the Madras Publicity Bureau (B) in Moplah Rebellion, Cmd. 1552, London, 1921 p. 40. In fact whereas the previous outbreaks may be described as homicidal riots the present one can be rightly classified as a rebellion. It has been all the more serious on account of the number of demobilized Moplah recruits to the army who had learnt something of the methods of modern warfare in Mesopotamia."

Indian Statutory Commission, vol. vi, pp. 586-602.

Memorandum of the Bombay Government to the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. vii, p. 214.

amount of property, it tends to be speedily divided into small fractions among his descendants. The Moplas are backward educationally. What little education they have is mostly religious. They are intensely religious, and look upon all non-Moslems as Kaffirs.

In contrast to Moplas, the Nambudiri landlords possess all the land in Malabar. They own stately houses. The economic contrast between the purple living of the Nambudiri and the hard living of the Mopla is also glaring. Nambudiri properties are not subject to division as the Mopla properties. The Mopla bears to the Nambudiri the relationship of a tenant to a landlord, a borrower to a moneylender. As such there is always friction between the two classes. These causes of agrarian and economic discontent have been recognized in the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1887. There have been many Mopla outbreaks in the past.

A leaflet issued by the Madras Publicity Bureau analyses the problem thus: ". . . there are two sets of causes predisposing the Mopla to outrage. The religious motive is the more powerful, but there is also the effect of the economic contrast between the hard living of the Mopla and the life of the stately houses belonging to the Nambudiri landlords . . ."¹ Sir William Vincent, the then Home member, spoke on September 5, 1921, thus: "The present rising in itself appears to be purely religious, though, no doubt, it has been accentuated by economic distress. In the past agrarian trouble has frequently been at the bottom of risings, but I have no information before me which leads me to think that Hindu landlords are responsible for the present outbreak."² Gilbert Slater also *thinks* that the religious aspect of the rebellion is the most important, while not denying the agrarian aspect.³

The Madras Publicity Bureau, Sir William Vincent and Gilbert Slater stressed the religious causes, while not denying the economic causes of the rising. The real economic causes were masked by religion as the classes belonged to different

¹ Mopla Rebellion, 1921, p. 39.

² In Mopla Rebellion (E), 1921, p. 50.

³ Gilbert Slater, *Southern India, Its Political and Economic Problems*, with a foreword by Lord Willingdon, Allen & Unwin, London, 1936, p. 297

faiths "The name of religion is invoked to cover purely secular animosities" Thus economic risings become religious or communal.

An officer who has had considerable experience in Malabar received a letter which gives an account of the outbreak

"The Mopla believes that the Sirkar is nearing its end, and the day is looming when he will not have to pay either taxes to the Government or rent to the Hindu landholders Economic distress is another factor not to be left out of account."

The failure of the monsoon at that particular moment was also a factor¹ Paying little attention to these real economic causes of the rising, over-emphasizing the religious factors which no doubt come into play, the Government flourished its theory, popular with the ruling class, that the rising was due to agitators² We will come to this point later

¹ Mopla Rebellion, 1921, p 51

² Mopla Rebellion, 1921 pp 39 50

3

The Bombay Riots

ON December 7, 1928, a strike occurred in the Oil Installations at Sewri. In order to carry on the work the Oil Companies engaged Pathans. This was a deliberately provocative act on the part of the Companies. The Government stood idly by. This led to serious clashes between the Pathans and the oil strikers, who were largely Hindus. These struggles between blacklegs and strikers developed into a struggle between Pathans and Hindus. There were other causes which led to such a development.

The Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee classed the causes of the disturbances under two heads, the remote and the immediate causes. In regard to the remote causes they were of the opinion that the riots were primarily due to wicked agitators.¹ They agreed with the view that the Girm Kamgar Union and the activities of its leaders were the basic cause of the riots.² They were of opinion that the rumours of kidnapping of the children by Pathans were spread by the communists.³ The riots in their opinion were not primarily communal, but communists versus Pathan.⁴ Above all, the Committee asserted that it was communism that led to communalism.⁵ Here is a deliberate attempt to evade analysing the problem correctly and endeavour to throw the blame on agitators. In the case of the Mopla Rebellion the scapegoat was mostly religion. In the case of the Bombay Riots the blame was cast mostly on communists. We will examine this imperialist theory presently.

In regard to the immediate causes of the riots, they were "of opinion that they were the attacks on Pathans as a result of the rumour that Pathans were kidnapping children, and because the Pathans had taken the places of some of the Oil

¹ Report of the Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee, Bombay, 1929, p. 3.

² Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

⁴ Ibid., p. 17

³ Ibid., p. 10

⁵ Ibid., p. 12

Installation strikers”¹ “They were also due to the fact that some of the Pathans were moneylenders, who had advanced money to mill hands at usurious rates of interest.”² The immediate causes of the riots were economic. In one case the Pathan is a scab and the Hindu a striker. In another case the Pathan is a moneylender and the Hindu, usually a mill hand, a borrower. This general economic discontent between the two classes was aggravated by the fact that the contending classes belonged to two different faiths. Here the Committee was right in saying that the struggles between the Pathans and the strikers developed into communal struggles.³ To say that this development was due to communism is to deny its own analysis of immediate causes. If the ‘immediate causes’ of the riots were due to the economic discontent of the Pathans and the mill hands, what has communism to do with these riots?

As for alleged subsidiary causes, the Committee asserted that the Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tanzeem, Tabligh, Arya Samaj, and Maha Sabha movements had no appreciable influence on the riots.⁴ The Committee concluded that the causes of the Hindu-Moslem tensions are partly political and partly religious, “the former dictated largely by the spirit of mistrust and fear felt by each community of the other.”⁵

¹ Bombay Riots Report, p. 10

² Ibid., p. 14

³ Bombay Riots Report, p. 5

⁴ Bombay Riots Report, p. 18

⁵ Ibid., p. 35

The Cawnpore Riots, 1931

RIOTS broke out in Cawnpore on March 24, 1931, on the occasion of Hartal following the execution of Bhagat Singh and two others in Lahore.

The Town Congress Committee proclaimed that Hartal should be kept on March 24th, and gave instructions for a procession of mourning. In the course of the Hartal, Hindus and Moslems came to blows.

A Commission of Inquiry was appointed to report on the causes of the outbreak. As usual the Commission classed the causes under two heads, the predisposing and immediate causes. The predisposing causes were the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Hartal and Tanzeem Movement.

At this time the Civil Disobedience Movement was in progress. The conservative Moslems from the first refused to join the movement. The congress Moslems who came to Cawnpore to speak were howled down. Communal Moslems got a hearing. The Moslem shopkeepers deeply resented picketing. They stood outside the movement. They even actively disapproved of it. They resented as well the picketing of schools and colleges.¹ On the other hand the supporters of the civil disobedience movement and Hartal were largely Hindus and some Congress Moslems. The Civil Disobedience Movement attracted to itself the Hindu business and commercial community of Cawnpore. They were ardent congressites.² The picketing of foreign cloth was beneficial to their interests.

The Hindu business partisans of the Congress were generally irritated with the Moslems for standing aloof from the national movement. On the occasion of Hartals the Hindu traders in Cawnpore were jealous of conservative Moslems who carried on business as usual.³

¹ Report of the Commission of Inquiry Cawnpore Riots, Cmd 3891, London, 1931, p. 10.

² Cawnpore Riots Report, p. 7

³ Ibid, p. 12

It was in this atmosphere, when efforts were made to enforce the Hartal strictly, that the riots broke out. The Commission classed these as the immediate causes.¹ The struggles between the two business classes belonging to different faiths developed into communal ones.

This development into a communal riot was in some measure due to the Tanzeem movement, but largely due to police inactivity and connivance.

But all the world over it was flashed that the Hindus and the Moslems fight to death, and the British Raj is necessary to play the part of a "composer."

¹ Cawnpore Riots Report p. 16

The Role of the Officials in the Furtherance of Communal Tensions

COMMUNAL tensions are at bottom class struggles. They take a communal shape because of the general background of the country, because the classes belong to various faiths. Religion is invoked to conceal their secular interests. A firm maintenance of law and order would in many cases check the struggles, but under imperialism they develop into major ones by the policy of counterpoise. Masterly inactivity, connivance and irresponsibility, contribute to the absence of preparations, and desire to control the disturbances especially where its interests are unaffected. This is amply borne out by various reports.

The Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee says "We are of opinion that there is considerable force in the contention that the Commissioner of Police should have proposed the calling out of the military somewhat earlier than he did. At any rate the experience of the recent riots shows that it is desirable to call out a strong force of the military and to take other drastic measures at an early stage . . ."¹

If the military had been called there would not have been a control of the riot, but a massacre of the rioters. Imperialism does not like this distinction.

In the case of the Cawnpore Riots the attitude of the officials was callous and criminal. The object of the officials was to disorganize the civil disobedience movement. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the Cawnpore riots says

"There is a general feeling," said a witness before us, "that the local authorities did not choose to take immediate and stringent measures because they were displeased with the business men for helping the Congress activities, and they

¹ Bombay Riots, 1929, p. 26

wanted to show that without the help of the authorities they cannot protect their lives and properties.¹ This attitude of the police during the riots was reprehensible² and inexcusable. "Every class of witness agreed in this one respect *that the police showed indifference and inactivity in dealing with various incidents in the riot*. These witnesses include European business men, Moslems and Hindus of all shades of opinion, military officers, the Secretary of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the Indian Christian Community, and even Indian officials. It is impossible to ignore such unanimity of evidence. There is no doubt in our mind that during the first three days of the riot *the Police did not show that activity in the discharge of their duties which was expected of them.*"³ A number of witnesses have cited instances of serious crimes being committed within view of the police without their active interest being aroused. We are told by a number of witnesses and the District Magistrate also has said so in his evidence, that complaints about the *indifference and inactivity of the police were made at the time*. It is to be regretted that *no serious notice was taken of these complaints*.⁴

The local authorities did not appreciate the seriousness of the situation. This is a serious indictment, and the Government of the United Provinces did not accept these findings of the report.⁵

It is in this fashion that the officials further the communal tensions and throw the blame on religion and malcontents

¹ Cawnpore Riots Report, 1931 p 7

² Ibid., p 38

³ Ibid. p 39

⁴ Ibid., p 35

⁵ Ibid. pp 63-67

Theories concerning the Causes of Riots

A THEORY is popular with the ruling class that disturbances arise because of agitators, malcontents, and communists. It is particularly so in the British Empire.

The local disturbances in Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies, were traced to an agitator named Clement Payne. Lord Olivier, in his speech on "Conditions in West Indian Colonies" in the House of Lords on February 23, 1938, said. "An agitator, of course; a man who voiced the sufferings of the people, therefore he is an agitator, therefore he is seditious, therefore the police can arrest him without warrant." The Bridgetown Commission of Inquiry reported: "There is no evidence that Payne had any influence in these areas, and it is doubtful if one person in a hundred outside Bridgetown had heard his name. It is our considered opinion, after surveying the whole field, that there was a large accumulation of explosive matter in the island to which Payne only served as a detonator, and that *the real cause of the disturbance was economic*. . . ."¹ All disturbances or so-called riots arise, according to Lord Olivier, from the attempt to arrest those who have been voicing the feelings of the masses. That has been the genesis of every row in the colonies between the authorities and the so-called rebels. It was the origin of the fracas in South Africa and of the disturbance in Kenya. It has been the origin of all riots in the West Indies.² In the eyes of the ruling class, closely connected with agitators are fanatics who foment troubles. The Trinidad Commission styled Uriah Butler as "a fanatical Negro"³ to whom they traced the recent disturbances. The Governor of

¹ Quoted by Lord Olivier in Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, February 23, 1938, vol. cvii, No. 32, p. 836

² Olivier, House of Lords, February 23, 1938, p. 844

³ Trinidad Report, Cmd. 5641, London, 1938, p. 57

Trinidad even noted the history of mental derangement in his family.¹ According to the Earl of Middleton, a fanatic is one who has strong convictions and sticks to them.² Butler has strong views concerning the Government and his people. If this is a crime, he is a fanatic. He is even an agitator "An agitator is a person who stirs things up,"³ said the acting Colonial Secretary. If there is nothing to stir, how can Butler agitate? There is plenty to stir, depression and repression. In the eyes of the ruling class, all those who voice the feelings of the masses are fanatics and agitators. Nay, they are even tools of a propaganda system, agents of the Comintern at Moscow. Butler was such a one the Duke of Montrose said.⁴ That "the immediate cause of the outbreak was the activities of Butler" was the profound remark of the Trinidad Report.⁵

At the same time the Lords and Dukes seem to know the true causes of the disturbances. Said the Duke of Montrose "The bottom of the trouble was the deplorable social conditions in which the coloured people were living, and this, coupled with advancing education, caused impatience at the slow progress of reform."⁶ Said the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava "It is clear that it is not housing conditions, it is not lack of trade unions it is not these things that have caused discontent in Jamaica. *What that discontent has been caused by is surely the low rates of wages paid*"⁷ These are not the utterances of rabid communists, but of a Duke and a Marquess. The causes of the disturbances, according to the Trinidad Report, were

1. The true origin of the disturbances must be traced to the more or less general sense of dissatisfaction for which there was no adequate means of articulation through the recognized machinery of collective bargaining.
2. This sense of dissatisfaction reached its culminating point

¹ Trinidad Report, Cmd. 5641 London, 1938 p. 108

² House of Lords, February 23, 1938, p. 853.

³ Trinidad Report, p. 118

⁴ House of Lords, February 23, 1938, p. 855

⁵ Trinidad Report, p. 82.

⁶ House of Lords, February 23, 1938, p. 855.

⁷ House of Lords, June 2, 1938, vol. cix, No. 70 p. 906

when the cost of living having risen, the earnings of the workpeople were not adjusted with sufficient promptitude to offset its effect

3. While many men stopped work under the stress of intimidation, there had arisen a widespread belief that a strike was the only means whereby an advance of wages could be secured to meet the increased cost of living, and to obtain redress of other grievances
4. This general sense of dissatisfaction, combined with a hesitant policy on the part of the Government in dealing with the hooligan element, resulted in the spread of trouble over a wide area ¹

These Commissioners in arriving at these conclusions redeemed themselves in their otherwise shallow report ²

In India, too, as we have noted already in the report on Bombay riots, the theory was maintained that the riots were due to the Girm Kamgar Union and the activities of its leaders. The report recommended stringent measures to be taken against the communists ³ at a time when the Meerut case was on trial

Communists are not a sect apart from the masses. They incessantly, hourly, and daily voice the feelings of the masses. They find the masses as they are, and not what they like them to be. They find the masses hungry and starving. They find the workers exploited. Their strength lies in proportion to their voicing of their demands correctly. They are agitators, because they stir up things that exist. They are fanatics because they hold to their views strongly. To have uninterrupted connection with the masses of the workers, and the ability to agitate continually among them, to take part in every strike and to respond to every demand of the masses are the central tasks of the Communists. They agitate, organize, and discipline the feelings of the workers. But they do not create sufferings. Popular riots are always due to popular sufferings.

¹ Trinidad Report, pp 81-82

² Look at Lord Oliver's observations "shallow most ignorant observations . . . not very accurate . . . not very reliable . . ." Parliamentary Debates, February 23, 1938, pp 847, 850.

³ Bombay Riots Report, p 37

Manshardt in a recent work analysed the problem thus "Social and religious factors have uncovered their full quota of strife, but they are not alone in the field. The more recent and most potent disturbing elements are economic and political."¹ "There is scarcely a grave communal disturbance in the rural areas in which the thread of economic oppression cannot be distinguished in the tangled skein of causes."² The real economic causes of tension between various classes are masked by religion used by the contending classes to serve their ends. This is different from saying that the differing religious practices are the immediate causes of tension. They no doubt play a role in the development of the problem into a communal one. Religious and other social factors enter the fray, but only to the extent they are made use of by the contending classes. Causes do not operate in a void. They operate in life. Hence they reproduce all phases of life according to the nature of the participants.

Here we have to make a distinction between communal tensions and the communal question or the demand for communal representation.

Nehru thinks "that the communal question is not fundamentally due to economic causes. He does not deny an economic background which influences it. He thinks it is due much more to political causes, and not due to religious causes. What Nehru means by 'political causes' is the struggles between the various sections of the professional classes belonging to various faiths, between the backward and the advanced sections. These class struggles no doubt take a political shape. But they are not due to political causes. They are caused by the relations they bear to the general economy of the country and the struggle between various interests conditioned by such economy. They are no doubt accentuated by the political policy of British imperialism. Such a one is no other than the policy of counterpoise. They certainly are not due to religious causes, as Nehru admits, although religious sentiments are exploited by these classes. Nehru does not deny the economic contest between a Hindu creditor and a Moslem debtor, between a

¹ Clifford Manshardt, *The Hindu-Moslem Problem in India*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1936, p. 51.

² Manshardt, p. 54.

Hindu landlord or a Moslem tenant, or "*vice versa*, between a moneylender and a debtor."¹

The communal question has no reference to religious issues. They refer to spoils and percentages, seats and favours. The communal question is in general a question of struggle between various sections of the professional classes belonging to different faiths.

The memorandum of the Government of Bombay to the Indian Statutory Commission put it thus: "Something is also due to the growth of education among Mohammedans . . . with the growth of political consciousness among the Mohammedans and other backward classes came a realization of their weakness, through, among other causes, the disproportionate share of appointments held in the public services by the advanced classes and the status and influence that go with them."² Here the Bombay Government recognized in the communal question the struggle between the backward and advanced classes for posts and emoluments.

The Madras Government put it differently: "It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the division is purely communal and regardless of political principles. If the two contending parties were to be described in political parlance, they might be called respectively progressive and ultra-radicals. The methods of the two parties differ widely in practice, and give rise to a number of points on which there are acute differences of opinion owing to the difference in the angle of vision."³ Here the Madras Government recognized in the communal question the struggle between two political parties based on different angles of vision without realizing that angles of vision are not independent of class interests. The communal question is confined then only to these classes. It has no specific reference to the masses.

The communal question no doubt accentuates the communal tensions, as in the Bombay and Cawnpore riots. The communal tensions disclose the struggles between other than professional

¹ J. Nehru, *India and the World*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1936, pp. 236-38.

² Indian Statutory Commission, vol. vii, p. 216.

³ Reforms Enquiry Committee, 1924, Views of Local Governments, 1923, Madras Letter, No. 838, July 16, 1923, Cmd 2361 (1925), p. 45

classes. That problem is wider than the communal question. The Bombay riots showed the cleavage between the strikers and the blacklegs, between the moneylenders and the borrowers. The Mopla riots showed the cleavage between the landless and the landed, between the tenants and the landlords. The Cawnpore riots showed the cleavage between two different sections of the business community belonging to different faiths. The communal question is largely a question of posts and preferences. The 'communal tension' is largely a question of popular discontent.

Whether in the case of the communal question (or the demand for communal representation), or in the case of the so-called Communal tensions," the real economic causes are masked by religious causes.

Religion and Economics

IT is therefore incorrect to throw the whole blame on religion. Stated in such a fashion, the problem remains unsolved. Voltaire observed: "In every country people make their religion fit in with their desires"¹ Religion is not an independent factor. It does not fall like manna from the sky. Man makes religion. He makes it out of the needs and materials he finds in the society in which he lives. Religion represents different stages of human development in different places. In other words, it is anthropology.² For this reason the religious, national, and social questions are indissolubly connected. Political and social emancipation is not independent of religious emancipation. Neither the Hindu nor the Moslem can emancipate himself without freeing the Indian society from Islam and Hinduism. Therefore we must subject religion and politics to rigorous analysis in order to formulate the question of communal disorders.

The question of communal disorders is mostly connected with the relations between different classes of different faiths, sometimes of the same classes of different faiths. The struggle between the school of separate electorates and the school of joint electorates is the struggle within the strata of the middle classes of different faiths and of different historical communities. The relations between a moneylender and a peasant, between a landlord and a tenant may be relations between different classes of different faiths. The class of moneylenders happens to be comprised largely of Hindus, while the class of peasants is Moslem. Sometimes the class of landlords may be Hindus and the tenants Moslems. On the other hand, the relations

¹ Voltaire, *Fragments on India*, translated by Freda Bedi, Lahore, 1937, p. 31

² L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 1881, translated by Marian Evans, Preface, p. xi

between strikers and blacklegs may be relations between the same classes of different faiths. In such relationships, religion, for good or evil, comes into the struggle.¹ It depends on the classes entering into the struggle and the locality in which the struggle takes place.

Hinduism and Islam represent different stages of human development. The Islam of the immigrant Moslems was divorced from its natural surroundings and transplanted into Indian surroundings. The association of Moslems with non-Moslem communities in different localities created different situations and outlooks. This also accounts, in addition to educational and economic factors, for cleavage of opinions and interests in the political classes of the same faith. The differences between general Islam and Hinduism ^W and between particular local Islam and Hinduism is expressed in the relationships of classes belonging to these faiths.

Moral ideas are the outcome of material needs. Religion is the organization of such moral ideas. At some stages of human development moral ideas and needs coincide.² They all have the same foundation. With the change of the foundation and the methods of production the needs also change. But moral ideas do not always keep pace with the needs. Religion still persists. The old forms still remain, while economic development advances and creates new social needs and new social standards. The longer the old forms of outlived moral ideas remain in force, the greater is the contradiction between the morals of the society and the life and action of its members. This shows itself in the different classes in different ways. The conservative classes, whose existence rests on the old social conditions, cling to the old morality. They do this only in theory, but they cannot escape the influence of the new social conditions. It is here that the contradiction between theory

¹ W. S. Urquhart, *Religion and Communism*, p. 547. "though the actual rivalry in its details may be due to other causes than religion." *The Hibbert Journal*, July 1937 pp. 546-55.

² K. Kautsky *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* translated by J. B. Aikew. Chicago, 1918, p. 184. "In the Eskimo society the theory and practice of morality agree with one another. In cultivated society a division exists between the two."

and practice begins.¹ The classes and individuals who perceive this gap abandon the traditional morality and adopt the new standards relative to their new needs. Some other classes and individuals who feel themselves weak transgress secretly against the moral codes which they publicly preach. This leads them either to cynicism or hypocrisy. This is what is happening in India today.² The contradictions between morality and practice are becoming deeper with the growth of class antagonisms.

Islam is primarily an ethical code designed for a people of simple habits. One of the basic precepts of Islam is not to pay or accept usury. This ethical idea, which coincided with the primitive needs, now runs counter to modern needs. On this question today opinion is divided according to the classes and individuals. One class is for holding the old precepts. Unclaimed interest on deposits made by Mohammedans in the Post Office Savings Bank amounts to lakhs of rupees. Some classes are in favour of distinguishing between interest and usury, and of allowing the one and forbidding the other. A Moslem may lawfully become a member of a co-operative society which charges but does not pay interest. The Punjabi Mohammedan is beginning to take interest like any ordinary moneylender. A courageous Moslem takes interest without scruples. A weak Moslem, to satisfy his conscience, takes it indirectly in service or in kind. Economic forces are greater than religious forces. Religious principle is obliged to give way to economic advantage.³

Hinduism, like Islam, comes into conflict with new needs and new standards of the age. Industrialism is opening up new fields of outlook. The workers of several castes have to work in the same factory. The people of different castes have to travel in the same railway compartment.⁴ They cling to the old

¹ For want of conformity between conviction and practice, see R P Paranjpye, *The Crux of the Indian Problem*, 1931, p 59

² H G. Franks, *Queer India*, chapter vii ("Religion is Business") is an excellent one, pp 221-42

³ M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquatur or the Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village*, 1930, pp 366-68

Ibid, pp 185-87

⁴ Indian Statutory Commission, vol 1, p 36

F. B Fisher, in *India's Silent Revolution*, New York, 1919, gives many instances of changes going on in India since the advent of industrialism

outlived moral ideas, yet they act differently in different surroundings. This has bred in the average Hindu a dual outlook—cynical and hypocritical. This again depends upon classes and individuals. Some flout traditional authority outright, some do it stealthily, some still cling to the old precepts. A Hindu is supposed to believe in ahimsa (non injury). He is not supposed to sell cattle to be slaughtered. Today in places where Hinduism has to contend with the influence of Moham-medanism and the standard of living is rising, useless cattle are freely sold by the Hindu and the Sikh to the butcher in central districts of the Punjab.¹ Even south of the Sutlej, where scarcity occurs, many are driven by economic necessity to sell their superfluous stock, though few dare to do it openly.²

This conflict between traditional moral precepts and practical needs is also visible among the Sikhs. The Sikh religion forbids the use of tobacco. This prohibition might have been based on sound common sense.³ The history of the origin and development of moral ideas in India is yet to be written. While the Sikh shuns tobacco and the barber, he loves his bottle.⁴ In some parts of the Punjab the use of the huqqa has become almost a vice. The Sikh is now beginning to cultivate tobacco

¹ Darling, *Rusticus Loquax* p. 183. "In the central Punjab religions are so mixed, population so congested, and the desire for a higher standard of living so strong that economic considerations are likely to prevail over the religious."

² Darling, *Rusticus Loquax* p. 104. "Recently a Hindu peasant sold a cow to a butcher. The news spread like wildfire and the cow was rescued by the men of a neighbouring village and the offender boycotted till he paid a fine of Rs. 25 to the village funds. But in both districts an appreciable number sell their cattle on the sly."

Ibid., pp. 133-34. The great scarcity of fodder was driving the Jats to sell their cattle in thousands. To satisfy religious susceptibilities the butcher who buys them employs Jat to deal with Jat and Gujjar to deal with Gujjar. Where public opinion is strong, sale takes place of the cow after dark, and next morning the absence of the cow is put down to a thief who cannot be traced.

Ibid., p. 183. It would also seem as if in this area the scarcity of the cow was in ratio to its milking and breeding capacity.

Ibid. p. 184. And he related how one dark night one of the Hindu servants of the *gowskala* (an almshouse for cattle) drove two cows to the slaughterhouse and explained their absence the next morning by saying they had been stolen.

³ Darling, *Rusticus Loquax* p. 185.

⁴ M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 1925 p. 38.

This conflict between traditional moral precepts and actual needs has produced a class, a decaying class, whose social instincts are dead, whose private interests are everything, who have become the hirelings of political padres. These weak classes who realize their private instincts in stealth, who disregard moral precepts in the dark, are the ones who do not fight the battles with those who override traditional ideas in conformity with modern needs. They are those who seek the aid of moral precepts in the open when some other private interests demand it so. To observe religion in the open to back up their interests, crawling on their bellies, and to disregard it in the dark to back up some other needs are the characteristics of these weak decaying classes. These are the backbone of the Suddhi and Sangatan, Tanzeem and Tabligh ¹

As the contradictions between traditional precepts and actual needs react on classes and individuals differently, the struggle among the classes and individuals takes place also differently. The reaction to the contradiction splits the men of the same faith into three classes.

1. Those who defend the old order.
2. Those who violate it in the dark, but practice it in the open for the defence of some other interests.
3. Those who disregard it completely and adapt their precepts to needs.

These classes of the same faith come into conflict with similar classes of the other faith, sometimes with those that

¹ The forcible conversion of Hindus by Moplas resulted in the inauguration of the Shuddhi and Sangathan movements (1921-1922) by the Hindus. In 1923 the Hindus of the United Provinces continued to organize a "reclamation" (Shuddhi) movement for recalling to the folds of orthodox Hinduism certain communities who were Mussulmans merely in name. This represented one manifestation of the Hindu Maha Sabha movement, the aim of which is to infuse fresh life into Hinduism and to organize the Hindus as a community in opposition to those who would threaten their interests or Sangathan. In opposition to this manifestation the Mussulmans have organized under the auspices of the Central Khilafate Committee the Tanzeem and Tabligh movements. These aim respectively at the enlargement of the Mussulman community by conversion from other creeds, the organization of an Islamic brotherhood to protect the interests of Mussulmans, and the concentration of efforts of the community to resist attempts at the reclamation of any members to the fold of Hinduism. Indian Statutory Commission, vol. vii, pp. 214-15

already exist. The Moslem moneylender, who now takes to this profession both stealthily and openly, comes into competition with the Hindu moneylender who is already established. Competition between these two groups takes place with reference to charge of interest. The Moslem moneylender who takes to the profession openly has to contend with the Hindu moneylender on economic or business grounds. The Moslem moneylender who takes to this profession stealthily contends with the Hindu moneylender openly on religious grounds.¹ By charging a lower interest than that of a Hindu moneylender, he not only helps his co-religionists, as he says, but also sins religiously. At the same time he becomes a formidable rival to the Hindu moneylender. It is the same with the Sikh who takes to tobacco growing. He comes into conflict with those who are already growing tobacco. These classes emancipated from the precepts of religion, fight against men and society to the degree of their emancipation. Thus a struggle against religion is also a struggle against men in the society and the way they make religion.

This conflict between religion and needs is expressed in the struggles between classes of different faiths, and sometimes between the same classes of different faiths. These struggles of classes are intensified in the period of the development of Indian capitalism, the growth of towns, the high cost of living, and the co-existence of several communities in the same locality and the consequent competition between them.

The relation between the classes of different faiths are different in towns from those in villages. The Reforms Enquiry Committee recorded that in rural areas the relations between the two communities are, generally speaking, friendly.² It is

¹ "and one of them in Mianwali when taken to task asked whether he was not doing his co-religionists a service in lending at 18½ % when the Hindu moneylender charged double the amount." M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquax* p. 186

² Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee Minority Report, p. 177. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquax* p. 22. "Muhammadian Rajaputs still observe a number of Hindu customs and even invite the Pujari or temple priest to their weddings."

Ibid. p. 42. "It is still the general practice for Hindu and Muhammadian to invite Mullah and purohit to their weddings."

Ibid., pp. 62-63. The same friendly relations are observed in Ambala.

mainly in towns, the report continues, that unfriendly relations sometimes lead to results which the saner section of each community deploras ¹ At the same time it is also true that in some rural areas the relations are by no means friendly In towns, as in Bombay, we also find the Hindu and Moslem dockers work together even in the midst of so-called "communal tensions."

The unfriendly relations exist in towns because it is there that politics and economics come into major conflict with classes of different faiths It is generally agreed that the reforms contributed a great deal to this unfriendly feeling ² Since the movement of the Indian political classes is a movement for the loaves and fishes of office, the backward classes seek artificial protection to gain favours from the Government This demand is sometimes backed by those classes who adhere to religion

"It is generally said that so far communalism has made little headway in the village "

Ibid , p. 75 "They agree, too, that the Hindu moneylender does not treat a Muhammadan client worse than a Hindu, if he is bad he is equally bad to both "

Ibid , p 137 "Both Hindu and Muhammadan attend the yearly fair and do puja—which is a further example of the neighbourly way in which these two communities mingle together in the village when left to themselves "

Ibid , p 284 He gives instances where the relations between the Hindus and Moslems are different in the case of educated people

Ibid., pp 288-89 "Not many miles away is the famous Muhammadan shrine of Sakki Sarwar, to which Hindus resort as freely as Muhammadans, sometimes to acquire merit, walking the whole way from Lahore to Amritsar "

¹ Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee Minority Report, p 177. They quoted the evidence of Mr Barkat Ali, a representative of the Punjab Muslim League According to him there is nothing of Hindu Mohammedan racial bitterness or feeling in rural areas In the agricultural portion of the Punjab their interests are common and identical In the smaller towns there is not much bitterness of feeling between the Hindus and the Moslems This acute phase of communal feeling which is talked of so much exists mainly in the bigger towns in the Punjab like Multan, Lahore, Amritsar, and Rawalpindi

² The memorandum of the Bengal Government records " and other communal movements were clearly connected with the reforms and with the struggle of the two communities for the political power offered by the new system " Indian Statutory Commission, vol viii, p 106

The memorandum of the United Provinces records "The real significance of this communal feeling is political " Indian Statutory Commission, vol ix, p. 7.

completely, and by those who observe it in the day and violate it in the night. This division is reflected in the Moslem political classes in a threefold manner, on the question of communal electorates

1 An important section, of which the chief spokesman is Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi, who was a member of the Government of India, maintains that separate electorates are essential to secure adequately the interests of Moslems. This section represents the All-Parties Moslem Conference held at Delhi.

2. Another section, of which the Maharajah of Muhamudabad, who was for some time a member of the Executive Council of the United Provinces, and Sir Ali Imam, who was for some time a member of the Government of India, are the leaders, represents the views of the All-India Muslim League that separate electorates are not only against the interests of Moslems and fruitful of evil, but are opposed to the interests of Indian nationality.¹

3 A third section stands midway between these two. The younger generation of Mohammedans is generally inclined to adopt the view maintained by the Maharajah of Muhamudabad, and does not support the views of the extreme section who maintain that separate electorates are essential.²

So even among these classes of the Moslem faith there are Swarajists, Congressites, Independents, and Conservatives. The conflict between religion and needs and their different reactions is also reflected in politics. The group which relinquishes the traditional precepts in conformity with needs is now represented by the younger generation of the Moslems.

We have already noted the struggles between the Hindu and the Moslem moneylenders, between the Sikh and Hindu-Moslem tobacco growers, and between the Hindu and Moslem

¹ This was in 1928. Later under the influence of unity movements in India, the two organizations presented a joint demand for communal electorates. The All Parties Muslim Conference, 1929 tried to bridge the conservative and constitutional schools of thought. *India 1928-29* pp 36 et seq., 42 ff.

² Report of the Indian Central Committee, 1928-1929 p 110. This division of opinion exists also among the Mohammedan members of this committee.

butchers.¹ The further relations between the various classes of different faiths run mainly on economic lines. Religion comes into the scene, dependent upon the class and the individual that is injured and the degree of their reaction to the contradiction between religion and needs.

The village Sahukar (professional moneylender) was once a spoilt child of the Government, today he is its stepchild.² His influence is gradually declining. The legal protection accorded to the peasants in the matter of land alienation, the growth of the co-operative societies, and the growth of a new class of agriculturist moneylenders undermined his importance.³ The village moneylender is half shopkeeper, half lender, and wholly usurer. Excluding the agriculturist moneylender, most of the money-lending of the Punjab is in the hands of three castes, the Baria or Aggarwal, the Katri, and the Arora—all necessarily Hindu.⁴ The Sahukar's rival is the agriculturist moneylender. The Sikh Jat is the arch-representative of this type.⁵ Here and there a Mohammedan Jat is finding ways of squaring the precepts of religion with the claims of business.⁶ The agriculturist moneylenders as a class comprise Sikhs and Moslems. They are economic rivals to the Hindu Sahukars. The economic rivalry between these classes is expressed in religious antagonism. The Moslem Jat is the one who breaks his traditional precepts and takes to money-lending slyly. He is also the one to invoke religion openly to express his antagonistic relations against the Hindu Sahukar. It is this cynical and hypocritical use of religion that most writers fail to evaluate when they explain away the communal tensions as purely religious.

In Western Punjab the moneylenders are mainly Hindu. The borrowers are mainly Mussulman peasants. Thornburn

¹ A paradoxical spectacle of modern India is a Hindu butcher. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 184. "Said the manager 'It was not so in the old days the Jats have become butchers and the villagers now have direct dealings with the slaughterhouse'."

² M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 323.

³ Ibid., pp. 207, 324. "The Sahukar was also suffering from the competition of the agriculturist moneylender."

⁴ M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, p. 212.

⁵ Ibid., p. 229. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 324.

⁶ Darling, *The Punjab Peasant*, p. 229.

wrote that the land-owning tribes of the Mohammedan, or western half of the Punjab, were generally indebted and sinking into the position of serfs or villeins to Hindu money-lenders.¹ The question is still alive today. Darling has calculated that the total debt of the Moslem peasants roughly amounts to 75 crores of rupees, or nearly 50 millions sterling. The creditors are all Hindus. The Land Alienation Act is protecting the Moslem landholders.² As a Zamindar said to Darling, if the Land Alienation Act has rescued the sheep from the wolf, it has only been to hand him over to the butcher.³ The agriculturist moneylender is largely the result of the Land Alienation Act.⁴ The Act created a capitalist peasant class. Sir Michael O'Dwyer thinks that the agrarian uprising of the Moslem peasantry in the South-West Punjab in 1915 was mainly directed against their Hindu creditors.⁵ This uprising was ordinarily classed as a communal disturbance. At

¹ S. S. Thornburn, *The Punjab in Peace and War* 1904, p. 252. Quoted in H. K. Trevaick, *The Land of the Five Rivers*, 1928, p. 333.

M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant* pp. 19-20 "Though almost the whole of it has been advanced by Hindus or Sikhs, neither being debarred by religion from the taking of interest, well over half has been incurred by Muhammadans."

Ibid., p. 71 "This incompetence in money matters, combined with the prohibition against usury which he has inherited from the law of Moses, put him (Moslem) at the mercy of the moneylender."

Supplementary note by A. Subhwardy *Cmd.* 3525 (1930) p. 4 "the wretched Moslem peasant finds himself bound hand and foot by the chains and shackles of the moneylenders, who are mostly Hindus."

Ibid., p. 49 "The plaintiff was a Hindu moneylender claiming Rs. 26,000,700 as principal and interest on a loan of Rs. 22 advanced thirteen years ago to the Muslim debtor."

² Minute of Dissent by the Raja Nawab Ali Khan. Report of the Indian Central Committee, p. 188.

³ M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant*, p. 230.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer *India as I knew it 1885-1925* pp. 200, 210. The Moslem peasants were heavily in debt to Hindu moneylenders.

On another occasion the Government of Bengal, in expressing its views on the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, writes "It has been suggested by the Mohammedans that a good deal of this lawlessness was due to the fact that moneylenders and wealthier men mostly came from the Hindu community the debtors and the poorer men from the Mohammedan community. It was further suggested that the origin of the trouble was economic and not communal." The next sentence is a deliberate non-committal evasion. *Whatever the origin might have been the actual result is well known.* How can the Government of Bengal control the results

the time of this uprising the effect of war on credit and prices was not taken into consideration by these critics. This uprising was of purely economic origins. But religion also came to the scene, as the contending classes belong to different faiths, and use religion in proportion to their reaction to the contradiction between religion and practical needs.

The Land Alienation Act of 1900 was opposed by the urban intelligentsia. They did not fail to note in the legislative economics of the Government of India a hidden policy of counterpoise. At the same time they resented the surrender of their monopoly of squeezing the peasants ¹

The antagonism between the moneylender and the debtor is sometimes extended to the Pathan. A Pathan is strong and husky. He is generally employed by a moneylender to collect the loan from his debtors. "Many moneylenders take the precaution of making their dues the first charge on labour, and outside the gates of many, perhaps most, large factories on pay-day stands the Pathan or other moneylender awaiting his dues" ² The antagonism of the puny Hindu debtor, in this part of Bombay, is also expressed against the Pathan who is employed by the moneylender, and who belongs to a different faith. This is more acute where the Pathan is a moneylender on his own account.

Another instance of the struggle between the same classes of different faiths is in the case of Hindu and Moslem landlords. As a class, comparatively speaking, the Hindu landlords have capital, enterprise, and energy. By applying all three to the land they have produced good results. The Moslem landlord is generally too lazy and too indebted to attempt any development. Even when not in debt he prefers to buy more land rather than improve the land he has ³ This is another cause of his professional jealousy of the Hindu landlord. At another without being sure of the causes? It *must* evaluate the causes instead of writing "whatever the origin might be."

No 222 A C Calcutta, August 22, 1930. Despatches from Provincial Governments in India containing proposals for Constitutional Reform, Cmd 3712 (1930), pp 84-85. Most ironically this note was by a Hindu member of the Government.

¹ Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I knew it*, pp 170-171.

² Royal Commission on Labour, p 226.

³ M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, pp 286, 333.

place the landlord happens to be a Hindu, the Moslem a tenant. Here comes the question of a struggle between classes of different faiths. Badale is a village where landowners are predominantly Hindu, while tenants are mostly Moslem. A leading Hindu Zamindar of the place is said to have demolished a *Takia* (Moslem rendezvous of a religious nature) with the object of constructing some other structure on the same site. Moslems obstructed this move on the ground that the *Takia* had existed from time immemorial. An altercation ensued in which a party of Moslems is said to have attacked the landlord, who in turn fired shots at the assailants.¹ The general economic discontent between the two classes flared up into a religious antagonism.

The struggle of these classes of different faiths increased during the years 1928-1933. These were years of industrial unrest. The Bombay outbreak of December 7, 1928, was no more communal than the uprising of South-West Punjab in 1915. Like all strikes, the Bombay strike was not without its hooligan element. In this the Government of India showed utter lack of responsibility. They did not prevent the companies from using Pathans, knowing full well that the employment of Pathan blacklegs would rouse antagonism among the Hindu strikers. They did not try to counteract the insidious rumours that inflamed the mob regarding the kidnapping of children. They did not make enough preparations to prevent the spread of the riot. This strike of purely industrial origins came to be known as a communal disturbance.

The Civil Disobedience Movement intensified these struggles between different faiths among the classes. This was due chiefly to the increasing exasperation created among Moslems by the paralysis of trade and the general atmosphere of unrest and confusion that resulted from the activities of the Congress. This situation was taken advantage of by the hirelings of political padres. The Benares riots of 1931 were due to the fact that a Moslem trader who defied the Congress picketers lost his life in the ensuing struggle. The Cawnpore riots of March 25,

¹ *Bombay Chronicle*, September 18, 1934. (The incident occurred on September 17, 1934. Badale is a village near Lullian, Lahore district, Punjab.)

1931, were regarded as the worst riots that India had known for many years. Here, again, the Government showed utter callousness to the situation and let the fight develop.

The Cawnpore and Benares riots were the result of contradictions between the needs of classes of different faiths, as well as the political policy of British imperialism. The Moslems were interested in their immediate needs. The Congress workers were interested in politics which would ensure their needs. The conflict is apparent. It is here that the Hindu realizes that he cannot emancipate himself without emancipating the Moslem. So does the Moslem. It is here that the contradiction between the politics of one faith and the economics of the other comes into conflict. This general conflict between the needs of two different faiths is sometimes expressed as the conflict between religion of one class and the economics of another.

1. On a Hindu holiday the Moslems will not close their shops. The Hindu shopkeepers feel jealous of the trade of the Moslems on that particular day.

2. On a Moslem holiday the Hindus will not close their shops. The Moslems feel the same way about it.

The general antagonism between the shopkeepers of the two faiths flares out into religious antagonisms on the respective holidays according as the classes and the individuals perceive the contradiction between traditional ethics and practical needs.

The antagonisms between the various classes of the same faith, between the same classes of different faiths are mainly material. Religion comes into the fray because it is a part of the social order in which men live. It cannot be dissociated from the modes of thought that characterize a society. The struggle, in the case of India, is expressed in religious forms. This expression again depends on the classes and individuals who generalize their experiences and needs. This generalization in turn depends on the mode of thought prevalent in the country, on the level of literacy, on the nature and locality of the country, and above all on men and classes. When we speak of "communal tension" we have to take these factors into consideration and formulate the question accordingly.

We have already noted that the reaction to the contradiction between traditional moral ideas and practical needs depends upon classes and individuals. The conservative classes who adhere to the old precepts, and at the same time feel the need for a change, give a religious expression to their antagonisms. The struggle between the classes can culminate only in a revolution against the foreign Government which rests on the contradictions between the classes. It is to the interest of the Government to see that the struggles are deflected in a different way so that it may not reach a stage when its own power will be undermined. The struggle against imperialism is side-tracked. This is only for a time until the whole society attains a stage of revolutionary crisis. Till then the disarmed classes struggle among themselves and against the Government with pyrrhic victories to their credit in the forms easily known and intelligible to them. It is the case particularly with the conservative classes of different faiths. The easiest way of expressing their antagonisms is to offend the faith of others. The necessary objective ideology is expressed in the thought easily available to them.

Many such examples can be given. In some parts of North India a sheep or a goat has to be butchered in a particular way. A Moslem, like a Jew, has to perform such rituals, and he butchers in a slow, tormenting way. A Hindu resents this. His resentment is illogical, as he himself lets a cow die a lingering death, when it could be easily relieved of pain by death if needs be. His canon of judgment applied to others, when applied to himself, goes against him, but such is the nature of the conservative classes who adhere to their old precepts and yet cannot escape the influence of social conditions. The laws relating to the method of butchering kine are sanctioned variously by their religions. If any of these rules are violated the communal tension snaps. How difficult it is to reconcile the holocaust of Kalighat with the Hindu horror of the Moslem's animal sacrifice!¹ Hindus parade their gods through the streets on some festival days followed by music and beating of drums. When such a procession passes by a Mosque it is anathema to a Moslem. The Hindus claim their civic right of using the

¹ Dr A. A. Suhrawardy "Supplementary Note," *Cmd. 3525* 1930, p. 46

King's highway and of playing music as they like, but they deny at the same time the use of the King's highway to the despised "untouchables." They challenge the Moslems' right of leading along the same highway their sacrificial cows to the places consecrated for sacrifices.¹ So inconsistent and contradictory are these forms of protest, symptomatic of the society in which they live. The blowing of conch shells by Hindus at inauspicious moments is disgusting to a Moslem. The placing of a dead pig in a Mosque, sometimes by an agent of the Government, is sure to cause trouble. The cutting of the branches of a peepal tree, venerated by a Hindu, is a sure sign of revolt. All these are ready-made methods by which these conservative classes express their antagonisms.

Here we must note two other factors which contribute to this tension. The differentiation of the classes and individuals participating in these religious antagonisms is very important for our purposes. The professional classes, some of them, utilize these conservative classes and individuals for their own purposes. The influence of this political section upon the conservative classes who often happen to be their hirelings is a factor which cannot be ignored. The general mob frenzy which takes place on occasions of this type, in surroundings of illiteracy and misinformation, is another factor which is often ignored. The underlying causes become submerged in this pandemonium of religious struggles, but at the same time the social-political-economic structure is forcing upon these classes conditions of their emancipation. They are expressed in intermarriages, intermingling of customs, and participation in the industrial life of the country. The Kasbatis of Gujerat, nominally Mussulmans, marry Hindu wives. The Gaekwars of Baroda wear in their childhood the symbols of Moslem mourning during the Muhurram festival. Moslems and Hindus work amicably side by side even in crime. We find a Hindu Prime Minister in Moslem Hyderabad, a Moslem Prime Minister in Hindu Jaipur and Mysore, a Moslem Chief Justice in Hindu Baroda. The Hindus and Moslems meet in national and other congresses. They have joined in common philan-

¹ Dr. A. A. Suhrawardy, "Supplementary Note" (to the Indian Central Committee), Cmd. 3525, 1930, p. 46

thropic bodies. The Seva Sadana Society, a Hindu organization, has a Moslem branch. The co-operative societies have brought the communities together for a common purpose. The clubs also act in the same way.¹ These points of contact are most noticeable in those classes who have given up traditional ideas in conformity with social needs. They are also noticeable in those classes who violate religion in the dark and observe it in the day. These are the most dangerous classes who violate traditional precepts if they come in their way, and who at the same time use religion to back up their other demands. These are the classes who contribute to the religious side of the tension between classes of different faiths.

¹ R. N. Gilchrist *Indian Nationality*, 1920, pp. 88-95. Even an Imperialist like Amery observes (Amery *op. cit.*, p. 223) "They (communal divisions) have not prevented the fruitful co-operation of Hindu and Moslem in the government of the states, or in innumerable public and private activities in British India. But they need present no insuperable obstacle to the development of a truly responsible system of self-government."

Summary

To sum up, the struggles between the classes of different faiths and communities can be reduced to three categories

1. There is the struggle between the professional classes of different faiths and communities. The Moslem, Sikh, Indian Christian, Anglo-Indian, Untouchable professional classes are unequal educationally, politically, and economically compared with the Hindu professional classes. The reforms and political ambitions increased this rivalry between these classes. This struggle has taken the name of the problem of minorities, or the problem of communal electorates.

2. This struggle is spread also to the commercial, industrial, and shopkeeping-trading classes of different faiths and communities. The rivalry between the Hindu and Moslem shopkeepers always comes into prominence during their respective holidays, and during the Civil Disobedience Movement. The rivalry between the Hindu moneylender and the Moslem borrower, between the Hindu landlord and the Moslem tenant, between the Hindu and Moslem moneylenders and between the Hindu and Moslem landlords comes under this category.

3. Lastly, there are the struggles between the conservative classes of different faiths arising from backwardness, illiteracy, sometimes from the machinations of rival politicians, mob frenzy, and all the social contradictions of the society.

These struggles, arising from the social economy of the country, are accelerated in an epoch of the development of Indian capitalism under feudal conditions, by British imperialism, by its policy of counterpoise. A necessary adjunct to this policy of counterpoise is absence of responsibility on the part of the ruling class. The severity of the Cawnpore riots has been traced to the absence of preparations on the part of the Government to meet the situation. So far as the riots on account of the playing of music before Mosques are concerned, they are

due to the failure of the magistracy and police to enforce law¹ The Moslems are entitled to slaughter cows subject to any municipal regulations or laws If communal tension is not to grow and these riots are to be put to an end, law should be strictly enforced. This is the view of Nair, Khan, and Oberoi in their memorandum to the Indian Central Committee.² Yet in the very name of law and order the Government brings its armed equipment to crush the movements of these political classes when directed against it.

All the backward classes of different faiths perceive these causes of antagonism theoretically Instead of fighting for the removal of these causes which give rise to class antagonisms, instead of allying with those who abandon traditional precepts in conformity with the modern needs, instead of dissolving the present contradictory society into its natural and necessary order, they are crying for artificial protection from the ruling classes The ruling classes, needing allies for their policy of counterpoise, never refuse such protection, knowing full well that religion does not constitute the only line of cleavage.³

¹ Memorandum of Nair Khan, Oberoi Indian Central Committee, p. 126 'In the eighties of the last century this question first arose in Madras. The law was enunciated by the High Court and riots due to this cause are practically a thing of the past in that presidency The law laid down by the High Court has now been accepted by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council about two or three years ago and its enforcement throughout India is bound to put an end to the trouble.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 126

³ The Public Services Commission notes 'Nor does religion constitute the only line of cleavage.' Quoted in Montagu-Chelmsford Report, p. 118

Part V

The Present Phase

I

Summary of Arguments for and against Communal Representation

Now we see that the problem of communal representation is not so unbridgeable as Lord Birkenhead thought. It is not a disease as Bhagawan said. Nor is it, as Amery wrote, an inherent necessity. It is just an aspect of British policy arising under conditions of Indian politics.

The solution of this problem is a matter of practical politics. It is so intimately connected with British imperialism that we have to take into account its position at relative situations, and the strength of the political consciousness of the country. From the analysis of the problem it appears that the only solution is the abolition of the principle of communal representation. My reasons for such a recommendation, as the Sinhalese said, are not on academic grounds. They are on such lines as those of Donoughmore and Hilton Young, who made similar recommendations in connection with Ceylon and Kenya. They have been presented in the body of the book as criticisms of the principle. They are

1 We have seen that commission after commission, parties of all shades, leaders both Indian and British, theoretically argued against communal representation. But they all retained it because some group demanded it. The British Government can use this practical unanimity to its own advantage and put an end to this farce in politics.

2 By the abolition of communal representation, its evils noted already, so widely prevalent in India, so universally recognized by everyone alike, and so ably stated by Montagu can also be removed. These are what Donoughmore calls "disintegrating effects." When once this principle was conceded, demands were easily forthcoming from other religious communities. After the Moslems came the Sikhs, the Indian

Christians, and the Untouchables The Anglo-Indians renewed their demands made much earlier than 1909. Women also sought protection in the form of this principle. The easiest solution is to put an end to this vicious circle.

3. The establishment of democracy in India can best be secured by the abolition of this principle. The British claim that the principle was devised with a view to assisting the development of democracy in a country of different races and religions, in the hope of eliminating the clash of their various interests. It was expected to provide, peacefully, an effective Legislative Assembly which would give a fair representation of the different elements in the population and tend to promote unity. This avowed object has never been realized. It has not helped to develop a uniting bond or link. It accentuated rather than diminished religious differences. The Donoughmore Commission wisely suggested that communal representation is least desirable when on a religious basis. The Hilton Young Commission argued: "While securing the representation of different interests it does little to reconcile them. . . . The surest foundation for a stable constitution is community of interests rather than a nice adjustment of opposing forces. . . . The determining consideration in a sound political system should not be the immediate interests of particular communities, but the ultimate good of the whole territory." Such All-India interests cannot prevail until after a tremendous struggle between the various classes whose interests do not coincide with those of All-India. That can be secured only by a revolution, and not by representation. Meanwhile communal representation does not assist the development of democracy.

4. The claim that the British intend to promote democracy in India is to be seriously questioned. The imperialist Amery recently wrote: ". . . the one thing which increasingly impressed the Joint Select Committee as they proceeded with their enquiries was 'not the strength of the Central Government as at present constituted, but its weakness,' and they concluded that the main problem was 'how to strengthen an already weakening Central Executive'."¹ This shows clearly that the British are more desirous of strengthening their para-

¹ Amery, *op cit*, pp 216-17.

mountney in India than training Indians for democracy. Besides, the Joint Committee report asserted that India is not fit for responsible government, on the ground that the prerequisites for such a government are lacking. According to the report they are enlightened public opinion and political parties. Communal representation made the last prerequisite weak by hindering the development of political parties in India, as in Ceylon. This is also due, as the Donoughmore and Hilton Young Commissions asserted, to the grouping of communities and interests in councils *without an attempt to reconcile interests*. Such a reconciliation can only take place by a revolution, and not by communal representation. It diverted the development of parties from lines of All-India interests to lines of religious communities. If this prerequisite, namely effective political parties, is to be realized, it can only be done by the abolition of the principle of communal representation and a grant of some responsibility to the legislators.

5 It is also claimed that the British conceded this principle on the urgent demands of the Moslems. The Duke of Devonshire told the same tale in Ceylon when he recognized the claims of the Tamils. But the Donoughmore Commission reported "private agreements between races or groups while worthy of attention, *cannot take precedence of considerations in the interests of the Ceylon people as a whole.*" It can be said similarly of the situation in India. The interests of the Indian peoples as a whole should predominate over those of particular creeds. The history of communal representation in India is a history of such private agreements between races and creeds, neglecting the general interests of India.

6 The main ground on which the claim for the representation of Moslems is made is that certain laws and customs of the Moslems, based on their religion, differ from those of the larger communities, and that disabilities in these matters might be imposed by the Legislature in the absence of Moslem spokesmen. The same claim was made in Ceylon. The Indian Legislature is not a sovereign body. The Viceroy in the present Legislature, even in the contemplated new structure, has ample vetoing powers. He could veto any legislation repugnant to any community. Besides, there has not been any instance

where legislation took place, or even was contemplated, which could be interpreted as repugnant to the interests of the Moslems or any religious community *No community which has asked for separate representation can show, or did show, that it has been treated badly by other communities* This swamping of the Moslems by the Hindus in the Legislature is an exaggerated fiction, and it does not call for protection of the Moslems and other religious communities in the form of communal representation. Even if the Legislature were anxious to oppress the Moslems in any way, it would not be prevented by the presence of a few Moslem representatives Therefore this policy of "*preferential treatment and concessions*" is no true remedy It merely introduces the apple of discord among various creeds.

7 It is claimed that communal representation equalizes different stages of political development of the various communities, their inequalities, and their backwardness The remedy lies in removing the causes for such different stages rather than in giving artificial protection. The Donoughmore and Hilton Young Commissions emphasized the remedial side of the causes of backwardness With reference to the Depressed Classes the Donoughmore Commission recorded that the enfranchisement of these people and the provision of equal adequate educational facilities are the true remedies for their condition

8 It is held that the complete abolition of the communal system might involve grave risks in the present state of communal feeling in India It was argued similarly in Kenya and Ceylon The "Cawnpore Riots Enquiry" clearly showed that communal outbursts could have been easily controlled by a firm maintenance of law and order There had not been any instance where the British did not enforce the law and order when it touched imperial interests. But where it touches communal interests, law and order does not exist But mere enforcement of law and order cannot control the situation entirely unless accompanied by a generous policy of raising the material and cultural conditions of existence of these communities

For these reasons, my view is that communal representation

should be abolished, and that a common electoral roll on an equal franchise with no discrimination between the communities be adopted. This road is much nearer to democracy than that of communal representation.

Since the policy of counterpoise is an integral part of British policy, a demand for the abolition of communal representation is a demand for the surrender of its major premise. It is a demand for struggle against British imperialism, against the policy of "preferential treatment and concessions," and against private agreements between various religious communities. Britain will not surrender its policy of counterpoise until it shifts the role played by it to other aspects of her policy, particularly to the strengthening of paramountcy. Already the new Constitution is written as a move in that direction. The more imperialism resorts to intensified offensive, the more the classes and the masses resort to united national resistance.

Political Characteristics of British Imperialism

INDIA is a classical colonial country.¹ Like all colonies, it is most acutely affected by the crisis. British imperialism draws its power from its colonial dominions. Capital in the imperialist countries shifts a considerable part of the crisis burdens to the colonies. It has succeeded in somewhat easing the position of industry not only by means of an intensified exploitation of the workers and peasants at home, but also in the colonies and the economically weak countries. The majority of the colonies being agrarian countries, suffered the full force of the crisis. That is why the crisis is deep and devastating in the colonies. The full effects of the crisis on the part of imperialism are shown in its intensified offensive against the colonial countries. The political characteristics of imperialism are an expression of this intensified offensive. What are they?

1 Whenever British imperialism is faced with a major or minor crisis in the colonies it always appoints Royal Commissions and Conferences. Its object in appointing these Commissions is political. It is not to find facts. It has plenty of facts. Let us take into account the Royal Commissions on West Indies. The Royal Commission of 1897 came to the conclusion that no reform afforded so good a prospect for the permanent welfare in the future of the West Indies as the settlement of the labouring population on the land as small peasant proprietors, and that in many places this was the only means by which the population in future could be supported. What happened to this recommendation? It was left to another Commission. Thirty-three years later, the Olivier Com-

¹ According to a recent estimate the foreign capital investments in India amount to £565 millions. See for a computation from 1911-1933, B. Ramachandra Rau, "Banking and Foreign Investment" in *India Analysed*, vol. III, pp. 87-88.

mission reached a similar conclusion and strongly urged a forward policy in this direction. What happened to this? It was left to another Commission. Eight years later, the Commission on Trinidad and Tobago disturbances of 1937 came to the same conclusions. What is being done? Another Commission is sent for an exhaustive study of the situation.

The Royal Commission in 1897, the Olivier Commission in 1930, and the Trinidad Commission in 1938 condemned the housing conditions in West Indies. What is being done? Another Commission is appointed to study the situation. Professor W. M. Macmillan went to the islands to be impressed, and he came away dismayed. He wrote: "It is the besetting national sin to take credit for the benevolence of our intentions."¹

It is the same in India. The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and that of the Royal Commission on Labour have not been put into practice. His Britannic Imperial Majesty has not enough facts for speedy action. It is to be left for further study by some more Royal Commissions. These Commissions serve principally to register "the benevolent intentions" of our benign imperialism.

They serve other purposes. The famous letter of Lord Birkenhead to Lord Reading is significant. It was a letter written by a Secretary of State to a Viceroy. On December 10, 1925, he wrote: "I should, therefore, like to receive your advice if at any moment you discern an opportunity for making this (the Statutory Commission) a *useful bargain-counter* or for *further disintegrating the Swarajist party*—if such an acceleration affords you *any bargaining value*, use it to the full, and with the knowledge that you will be supported by the Government."² Here is a classic statement by Birkenhead on the need of appointment of a Commission from the standpoint of imperialism. The object of the Commission is not to find facts, not even to register benevolent intentions, but to use it as a bargaining counter to disintegrate political parties in

¹ W. M. Macmillan *Warning from the West Indies—A Tract for Africa and the Empire* London 1936, p. 20.

² Earl of Birkenhead, *Frederick Edwin Earl of Birkenhead the last Phase* London, 1935 (second volume) p. 251.

opposition to imperialism and to use it in full as a bargaining value

When the Simon Commission was appointed, the news of impending boycott quickly reached Lord Birkenhead. In a private letter of January 19, 1928, he wrote to the Viceroy "A friendly attitude of unobtrusiveness, willingness to acquire information and make friends, seems to me clearly indicated. I do not, of course, mean that where the response is likely to be friendly preliminary discussions might not take place. *We have always relied on the non-boycotting Moslems, on the depressed community; on the business interests, and on many others, to break down the attitude of boycott.* You and Simon must be the judges, whether or not it is expedient in these directions *to try to make a breach in the wall of antagonism*, even in the course of the present visit."¹ The boycott continued. In February he again wrote to the Viceroy "I should advise Simon to see at all stages important people who are *not* boycotting the commission, particularly Moslems and the depressed classes. I should widely advertise all his interviews with representative Moslems. The whole policy is now obvious. It is to terrify the immense Hindu population by the apprehension that the commission is being got hold of by the Moslems, and may present a report altogether destructive of the Hindu position, thereby securing a solid Moslem support and leaving Jinnah high and dry."² When Commissions work with such political objects, we can see how useless are their reports and recommendations.

The Round Table Conferences were designed according to the formula of Birkenhead. They divided the political classes into those for and against. The Report of the Royal Commission on Palestine also divided the Zionists into those for and against. We can recall the move by the British Government some years ago in the case of Ireland. Lloyd George suggested that an Irish Convention, consisting of all parties, should be held for framing a Constitution for Ireland. The Sinn Fein Party saw the game and boycotted the Commission.

Sometimes the commissions are used to dampen the sym-

¹ Birkenhead, op cit, vol 11, p 254.

² Birkenhead, op cit, vol 11, p 255

pathy expressed outside India on behalf of the Indian nationalists.¹ The real object of publishing the first volume of the Simon Commission earlier than the volume of recommendations was to let the British and American readers know how unfit is India for responsible government. But officially it was stated that if the recommendations were to be properly appreciated a true picture of contemporary India should be made available to the public.² It was a political manoeuvre. In this subtle and indirect way the Commissions are used as propaganda instruments. Now and then, when a Commission reports favourably to the political classes, it is done to register benevolent intentions, and to show that the imperial Government is giving its earnest attention to the reports.

Sometimes they are used to gam and bide time, to carry on the same exploitation with a promise of thorough investigation. The precedent of granting reforms at the end of every ten years was broken by the Simon Commission. It took seven years more than usual to concede further so-called reforms. Sometimes the gap between the appointment of the Commission and its report is used to cover up masterly activity of exploitation and repression, and not masterly inactivity. This is the case in West Indies, India, and Palestine. Manifold are the ways of imperialism.

2 The second political characteristic of British imperialism is the deliberate use of ambiguous words in the documents. The object is to mould imperial policy according to political expediency. A certain flexibility of the terms is necessary if such policy were to be realized. This is secured by deliberate ambiguity. The Royal Commission on Palestine clearly stated that 'the general uncertainty, accentuated by the ambiguity of certain phrases in the Mandate, as to the ultimate intentions of the Mandatory power' was one of 'the other factors

¹ H. Cadogan *The India We Saw*, London, 1933, pp. 298-99 (Cadogan was one of the members of the Commission). 'In foreign countries it had a remarkably favourable press, particularly in the United States of America, where the general comment was that a great deal of the sympathy which previously had been evoked on behalf of the Indian nationalists would not have been forthcoming had the real conditions of India been better appreciated.' The inference is obvious.

² Cadogan, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

which contributed to the Palestine disturbances.¹ The Balfour declaration of 1907 has undergone several modifications.² The Jews for their support in the war were promised Palestine as a National Home. But Palestine is part of an independent Arab Confederation. It cannot therefore be a Jewish National Home. The Arabs for their support in the war were promised independence in the event of an Allied victory. The Palestine Arabs' demand for independence was met with the reply that Palestine was not included in the area promised to Hussein. When the Zionists presented their case, the Balfour declaration was interpreted as, "Not Palestine as a National Home, but a National Home in Palestine." Incompatible promises to both the Jews and the Arabs led to inconsistent interpretations made possible by the ambiguity of words.

The use of the phrase "paramountcy of native interests" in Kenya is a good example. It came into currency during the period of struggle between Indians and Europeans. It was designed to offset the claims of the Indians by championing those of the Kenyans. This angered the European community. When they threatened direct action against the Government a new meaning was given to the phrase "... One can only conclude that native interests are not intended to prevail to the extent of destroying the interests of the immigrant communities already established, and that their 'paramountcy' must be subject to this limiting condition." "The British Government must retain responsibility both for the advancement of native interests and *for holding the scale of justice between the various communities in order to discharge these responsibilities, the ultimate authority must be retained in the hands of the Imperial Government*" Ultimately, "paramountcy of native interest" means "paramountcy of British imperialism."

"Responsible government" is another word that is used ambiguously. For two years a debate was staged in India as to its meaning. Grey pointed out in 1851 that *responsible government is a system well understood but not legally defined*. He therefore deprecated its insertion in an Act. *Responsible government must be based not upon statutory conditions but "on the faith*

¹ Royal Commission on Palestine, pp. 111-12 —

² Royal Commission on Palestine, p. 33

of the crown"¹ The faith of the Crown is nothing but the political expediency of imperialism whose executive committee, the Government of the day, carries into effect.

On October 31, 1929, Lord Irwin made a declaration giving an assurance that the natural goal of India's advance was Dominion status. This is another ambiguous word that is used by imperialism at critical moments. The moderates and Moslems were favourably impressed with this declaration. The Viceroy rallied the moderate opinion. The subsequent events showed that the goal was not Dominion status, but further strengthening of British paramountcy in India. The old game was played successfully.

It was Lord John Russell who said "Concede Responsible Government *only* if and when *you must*." If and when it is so conceded, it will no longer be a concession.

Another word which is used ambiguously is "Non intervention." It is, as Talleyrand wrote "a metaphysical and political term that means almost the same thing as intervention." The Spanish policy of Britain and the Runciman mission in Czechoslovakia are good examples of intervention in those countries in the name of non intervention.

3 The third political characteristic of British imperialism is a timely concession whenever its interests demand. These concessions have, in their turn, several characteristics. They must be circumscribed by imperial interests, so much so that they amount to nothing. The classic exponent of this view is Lord Lytton. They must not impair British paramountcy. The classic exponent of this view is Lord Cromer. He wrote "however liberal may be the concessions which have been made, and which at any future time may be made, we have not the smallest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions, and that it is highly improbable that any such intention will be entertained by our posterity." He asserted emphatically that the bedrock of every reform must be strengthening of paramountcy. The Government of India Act of 1935 was primarily designed with this end in view. The concessions must divide the opposition front into those who accept and

¹ K. C. Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster 1931* Oxford, 1933 p. 27. See the interesting references given here.

Lord Cromer *Imperialism Ancient and Modern*, pp. 126-27.

those who reject them. They always split the Indian movement. Above all, they must rally the moderates. The classic exponents of this view are Morley and Minto. A corollary of this policy is the use of studied flattery. Sir Arthur Grenfell told the Arab High Council "I am confident none of you gentlemen associate yourselves with this manifesto on any illegal act." The moderates are always well spoken of. It is for these reasons that concessions have not been given to the Indians or the colonials *any real substantial power*. They are the cheapest that we can get. They are "sops to impossible ambitions." They are given "to clip the wings of disaffection." But this does not mean that concessions are useless. They are always an index to the growth, strength, and political consciousness of the classes and masses in opposition to imperialism. They are stepping-stones for higher levels of political consciousness. They are breathing spaces necessary for further mastery of strategy and tactics. A nation does not arrive at liberty by concessions alone. All that the nation wishes to secure will not be acceptable to imperialism. Hence in the protracted struggle with imperialism concessions are wrung by the political classes. During the last fifty years the Indian National Congress has grown strong organizationally and politically in its struggle against imperialism.

4 The fourth political characteristic of British imperialism is what is called "the dual policy." Reform and repression go together. Lord Willingdon was the classic executor of this doctrine. Lord Morley wrote to Lord Sydenham when he was Governor of Bombay. "We cannot allow Tilak and his men to set the law at defiance. This must be made plain, both in our interests and theirs, for if we get a character for timidity there is an end of 'Reforms'." Sydenham added "The last sentence was eminently wise."¹

A similar one is the dual policy of "distrust" and "confidence." Indians are distrusted and trusted. They are taken to the highest councils of the Empire, and yet privately classed as parts of "Indian humbug."²

¹ Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, London, 1927, p. 224.

² The word was used by John Buchan, now Lord Tweedsmuir, where he quoted a picture of Surendranath Banerje by Morley which amounts to an Indian humbug. *Lord Minto*, p. 299.

5 The fifth political characteristic of British imperialism is the policy of counterpoise. Imperialism likes to divide and rule. Diverse are the ways of counterpoise. Sometimes one religious group is set against another. Sometimes one part of the territory like the Indian states and tribal areas are set against another part of India, called British India. Sometimes the masses are set against the professional classes. The abolition of communal representation in Ceylon does not mean the abandonment of the policy of counterpoise. The grant of universal adult suffrage to the Ceylonese is intended as a counterpoise against the predominance of the professional classes. When this measure facilitated a mass entry and mass consciousness, a cry now is raised that the powers of the Governor should be strengthened. The creation of Sind as a separate province is not only a concession to the Sindhi professional classes, but also a counterpoise against the Hindu professional classes outside Sind. It is the design of imperialism to create a Moslem state as a counterpoise against Hindu India. This is how the principle of *self-determination of nations works out under imperialism*. The freedom of the Sindhis begins with the freedom of the Indians. It begins with a break with imperialism. Sometimes one interest is set against another. The Oriyan Zamindar is pitted against the Oriyan professional classes. The handiwork of counterpoise is everywhere. It is seen even in the convening of conferences. The Round Table Conferences are classic examples of this policy of counterpoise.

6 The sixth political characteristic of British imperialism is strengthening of paramountcy. This is sometimes secured by deliberately creating such circumstances as make it appear that it is necessary to strengthen paramountcy. We have seen that almost all the reports of the riots accused the Government of political indifference, and of failing to maintain law and order. On the strength of these reports, the Government strengthens its paramountcy. When that is secured it is used not for the maintenance of law and order for the people, but for the maintenance of imperialism. Sometimes by the policy of counterpoise it creates such a situation as in Palestine, where it definitely rules out government by a legislative council. The Royal Commission on Palestine says 'We doubt, indeed, if

anywhere else the principle of impartiality between different sections of a community has been so strictly applied. The government of Palestine might almost be described as government by arithmetic.”¹ The contending classes in Palestine have not yet attained an equilibrium of forces where the state could afford to be neutral or impartial. There are certain exceptional periods, wrote Engels, when the struggling classes attain a certain equilibrium of forces, so that the public authorities become temporarily and to some extent independent of them, and become a sort of arbiter between them. Sometimes, very rarely, the state could appear as if it were above the classes facing each other.² Till then it is the interested party. The Palestine Government is the political organization of British imperialism. Its Government may aptly be called the Government of counterpoise. It organizes a semblance of “order” which damps down the conflicts between the classes so that these struggles should not devour society. In the name of holding the scales even between the two contending classes a further strengthening of paramountcy is secured. The Legislative Council is held in abeyance. And now a naked, terroristic, brutal dictatorship reigns and rules in Palestine. It does also in West Indies.

These characteristics are not accidental. They are the political expediences of monopoly capitalism, and expressions of the increased offensive of imperialism since the world economic crisis. This was felt most severely during the period of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Imperialism, by its position, has to solve what Macaulay called the hardest problem in politics, to give a good government to a people to whom she cannot give a free government. A good government to a people cannot but be a free government. Under imperialism a free government, as James Mill wrote, is “utterly out of question.” A free government begins only with a break with imperialism. Minto wrote to Morley, May 16, 1907. “We cannot move far in that direction (responsible government) *and any move we make is merely a sop to impossible ambitions.*”³ It is true even

¹ Royal Commission on Palestine, p. 139

² J. Berlioz, *The Modern Charter of Labour* in International Press Correspondence, February 19, 1938, p. 130

³ *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, by J. Allan, Sir T. Wolseley Haig, and H. H. Dodwell, Cambridge, 1934, p. 876

today In 1853 Marx wrote to Engels that excepting the revolutionary role played by the British in the earlier stages of her rule, "for the rest the whole rule of Britain in India was swinish, and is to this day"¹ It is so even today

On the other hand the economic crisis and the increased offensive of imperialism led to the radicalization of the classes and masses The direct consequence of the increased offensive of imperialism is an increase in the national discontent with and indignation against imperialism. It gave rise to the most favourable conditions for the creation of an anti imperialist united front of the broadest masses of the population. It led to increased rivalry between the imperialists and the Indian capitalists creating the possibility of utilizing these contradictions for the development of an anti-imperialist front. It weakened the influence of reactionary bodies like the League and the Sabha on the masses as shown in the growth of the peasant movement. It led to several groupings even within the Congress There are several groups in the Congress who are ideologically backward, and desire to prevent the Congress from going ahead. But the Congress as a whole is moving ahead.

The Indian National Congress is no longer what Dufferin called "a microscopic minority" It is no longer a humble petitioner It is now a grand remonstrant. To the Indian people the National Congress today represents the National Front uniting all forces in India who are struggling against foreign domination and for national liberation.

The effect of the crisis and the increased offensive of imperialism is seen in the growth and strength of the working-class consciousness This is seen in the growth of the strike movement. In the year ending December 31, 1937, the number of working days lost in India owing to industrial disputes and strikes was 8,982,000 647,801 workers were involved in these disputes and strikes There were in all 379 labour disputes, 220 in cotton textile and jute mills, affecting 82.2 per cent of the workers The Bengal Nagpur Railway strike, which ended in February 1937, resulted in the loss of 680,000 working days The number of strikes in 1937 is more than double that of

¹ Marx to Engels, London, June 14, 1853

Marx and Engels correspondence, London, 1934, p. 70.

1936, and only seventeen short of 1921 record. The number of workmen involved is nearly four times the number for 1936, being the highest on record for India. The number of days lost is nearly four times that in 1936, the highest recorded figure for India being 31,647,404 days in 1928. In 62.8 per cent of the strikes, the workers' demands concerned wages or bonus payments. In 45.9 per cent of the cases the workers were successful in gaining concessions.¹ The Cawnpore strikes of 1937-1938 raised the workers to a new phase of consciousness. These Cawnpore strikes brought into forefront the need of unity between the workers and the Congress, and the identification of workers' struggles as part of national liberation struggles. This growing consciousness is seen in the achievement of Trade Union unity.

1932 is the worst year of economic crisis in India. The income of the cultivator in 1931-1932 was reduced by almost one-half compared with 1928-1929. As the bulk of the population in India lives on agriculture, this decline has a significant bearing on the purchasing power of the people. This is further reduced by the fact that the cultivators, ultimate consumers, have to make certain payments to the landlords, Zamindars, and moneylenders. In 1933 the burden of indebtedness nearly doubled. The failure of the monsoon worsened the economic distress. It is this that accounts for the phenomenal growth of the peasant movement, accompanied by huge peasant demonstrations. This coincided with the big strike movements of the workers in towns. The changes brought about by the crisis are leading the peasants to organization as a class and to their natural allies, at the present stage the workers and the Congress. It is this crisis and the increased offensive of imperialism that is also leading to the development of opposing forces.

¹ *Empire, a Monthly Record*, vol. 1, no. 4, September 1938, p. 37.

The Development of the Opposing Forces

COMMUNALISM or Careerism is the product of the imperialist-capitalist feudal structure of India. From the same structure arise the opposing forces against communalism, for unity, and for a united National Front against imperialism. Not all Moslems are communalists. The Muslim League and the Muslim Conference represent the upper Moslem classes. The Muslim Conference, as Nehru writes, is a galaxy of knights, ex-ministers, and big landlords. It has little contact even with the Moslem lower middle classes. Its problems have nothing to do with the Moslem masses. But it has some religious influence on them. While the League and the Conference are moving in one direction, the Moslem masses are moving in another. The Moslem peasant finds that his interests do not differ from those of a Hindu peasant. The Moslem worker finds the same unity of interests with the Hindu worker. Under the influence of the workers' and peasants' struggle and of the National struggle of 1930-1932, the Moslem masses were drawn to the Congress. They participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. In 1930 and 1931, 14,000 of them went to jail. In 1932 several thousands of Moslems, including four hundred divines, went to jail. The "Jamiat-ul Ulema," representing the religious opinion of a very large number of Moslems, supported the Congress. In the elections the Moslems rallied in large numbers round the election programme of the Congress. They also responded to the anti-Constitution Hartal of April 1, 1937.

This naturally alarmed the communalist leaders. They wanted to make amends for their isolation from the masses by the mouthing of radical phrases. The Muslim League, on one hand, has declared itself in favour of independence, denounced the Federation, and put forward an economic programme at Lucknow in October 1937. On the other hand, it has intensified communal propaganda. By this radical-communal programme

the League tried to win the masses to its cause. It succeeded in winning some sections of the backward masses still under religious influence.

This movement towards the Congress, towards anti-imperialist activity is not confined to the Moslem masses alone. The Moslem Youth and Student groups, the Moslem Congressites are also moving in that direction. The Congress has in its fold several Moslems. Some of its eminent leaders have been Moslems.

The same forces are driving the professional classes and their organizations towards a Congress-League unity. Gandhi took the initiative and opened up conversations with Jinnah. His lead was approved by the Working Committee. The League was asked to join the Congress in its fight for Independence. The Congress should have complete freedom to carry its propaganda among the Moslem masses. As a price, the Congress is willing "to agree to all the demands of the League consistent with Nationalism."

The reply of the League to the Congress proposals is now known. The Bose-Jinnah correspondence on this question was published in August 1938. The substance of the correspondence is the same as that of the Nehru-Jinnah and Gandhi-Jinnah correspondence.¹ The League demands that the Congress should recognize the League's exclusive right to represent the Moslem masses. The Congress did not accept this demand for three reasons. In the first place there are many Moslem organizations which are independent of the League. Secondly, there are many individual Moslem supporters of the Congress. Thirdly, the North-West Frontier Province, which is predominantly Moslem, is with the Congress. Therefore the contentions of the League that it should be recognized as the only representative organization of the Indian Moslems, and that the Congress should cease its activities among the Moslem masses, are untenable. The demand can only mean that the Congress should have nothing to do with the Ahrars, Jamait, and other national Moslem organizations. It means that the

¹ See Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence, including Gandhi-Jinnah and Nehru-Nawab Ismail Correspondence, published by J. B. Kripalani, Allahabad.

Congress should have nothing to do with the anti-imperialist Moslem organizations. While the Congress is for unity of struggle against imperialism, the communalist League is for a monopoly of right to represent the Moslems. This monopolist right to represent the Moslems is as fantastic as that of the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference to represent the Ceylon Tamils. Under no circumstances should the Congress abandon its right to carry on the anti-imperialist propaganda among the Moslem masses.

The League itself is torn with dissensions. A differentiation is to be seen in the upper classes and the lower middle classes in the League. The stand taken by the Congress ministries in Bihar, United Provinces, and Orissa, although lukewarm, on the question of the peasants, in sharp contrast with the cowardly attitude of the League ministries in Bengal and Punjab, caused the Moslem masses to rally round the Congress. The League fears the rising peasant movement. It has to mouth radical phrases to capture the lower middle classes and the masses. This broadening of the base is coming into conflict with the *upper-class leadership of the League*. This is seen in the Cawnpore strike of May 15, 1938. The reactionaries in the League failed to disrupt the strike struggle of the Cawnpore workers. The Moslem workers in the Cawnpore textile mills have not been impressed with the policies of the League, which has ignored their interests. Noting this isolation, the Muslim League of Cawnpore itself became a lever for mobilizing support of all sections of Moslems in the city. It has taken a sudden turn to the left. It congratulated the Moslem workers on the success of the strike during the second week of September 1938. It adopted a resolution, by an overwhelming majority, which debars office-bearers of the League from holding any office in a landlords organization. A third decision of the League seeks to wipe off the debts of the peasants and the workers. Among the second-rank leaders of the League a left wing is growing. Therefore in opposition to this progressive trend the *reactionary leaders* in the League want unity, a unity of struggle not against imperialism, but against the rising peasants, workers, socialists, communists, and congressites, a unity to share small, large, little jobs. To this unity must be opposed the unity of the anti imperialist forces.

The present unity movement between the League and the Congress must not ignore the lessons of the past movements. In 1916 the League and the Congress entered into a pact to voice their joint opposition to the Montford reforms. In 1919-1920 both of them joined hands for a common mass agitation against the abolition of the Khilafate and against the Rowlatt Bills. The Hindu and Moslem masses came together in joint demonstrations and meetings of protest against imperialist repression. The joint action became the nucleus for drawing the Moslem masses into the orbit of united national struggle. At this time a large number of Moslems flocked into the Congress. This entente broke down with the collapse of the non-co-operation movement.

The upper class leadership of the Muslim League joined hands with the pro-imperialist reactionary feudal elements. It became a tool in the hands of imperialism to smash the national Congress, and to destroy the rising organization of the workers and peasants. It co-operated with the Simon Commission in 1927. It opposed the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931. It took a pro-imperialist stand in the Round Table Conferences.

This isolation of the upper-class leadership of the League from the masses made the masses move as we have already noted towards the Congress. This growth of anti-imperialist consciousness among the Moslem masses is also due to the initiation of the Moslem mass contact campaign by Nehru. In the United Provinces itself the League stood on the verge of collapse. Since the beginning of 1938 in the district of Allahabad a struggle was going on between the Kisans and the Zamindars. Some of the Zamindars are Moslems and strong supporters of the Moslem League. So they tried to appeal to a section of the Kisans, the Moslem tenant, on the religious plank. This was an eye-opener to the Moslem Kisans. They learnt that religion was used as a mask by their exploiting co-religionists. They found who their friends and foes were. They ceased to belong to the Muslim League when they found it was their foe. The Communal Moslem League suffered a severe blow.¹

In Bengal during the elections the League representing loyalist landlords was soundly beaten by the Praja Party. The

¹ *National Front*, July 31, 1938, p. 10

Praja Party itself was dominated by the army of middlemen parasites like taluqdars, pattanidars, darpattanidars, creatures of the Permanent Settlement who fatten on the lifeblood of the Bengal peasant. The Praja Party changed its name to Krishak Praja Party on the eve of the Assembly elections. By advocating a radical peasant programme it won a phenomenal success at the polls. Fazlul Huq, the leader of the party, soon betrayed his supporters, joined the pro-imperialist group, and entered into pact with the Zamindars. Most of his followers left him and joined the Congress. The pro-landlord sectarian attitude of the Bengal Congress was responsible for several peasant masses, mostly Moslems, remaining under communalist influence. This attitude of the Bengal Congress led to the utilization of communal weaknesses by Huq. The more or less passive influence of the Muslim League on the Moslems was nearly crystallized into more or less organized influence. These held a rally for the Huq ministry, which was offset by the anti-ministry rally of more than fifty thousand peasants who noted Huq's betrayal. This was an object-lesson to the Kisans. They realized that the frontiers of their struggles are not religion and race, but class interests. They noted the connection between landlordism and imperialism.

The growth of the anti-imperialist forces in the backward province of Sind is significant. The Congress defeated a Muslim League Zamindar at Khankhote. It routed a Hindu Maha Sabha candidate in Sukkur. It unseated the reactionary Hidayatulla Cabinet. In the bye-elections in the United Provinces the Congress secured 16,000 Moslem votes as against 15,000 secured by the League. The Manbhum District Congress Committee reported that a local Muslim Leaguer assaulted a local Muslim Congress worker. The Muslim Congress worker was called "Mirzafir" (Betrayal) by the Muslim Leaguer for working for the Congress cause. This started the assault. This differentiation of the Moslems on class lines is an important feature which is often ignored.

It was this radicalization of the Moslem masses that led the League to a declaration of a radical programme at Lucknow. The logic of events forced them to be radical. This in turn led to the differentiation of classes within the League. Here is the

development of the opposing forces, the top leadership of the League in alliance with the imperialists, the lower middle classes, and the masses in alliance with the anti-imperialist forces. The lesson of the previous unity movements is clear. Unity has been possible, and is possible, when the interests of the immense majority of the masses are taken into account, when the organizations seek their source of strength in the masses.

In 1916 and 1919-1920 the League was in touch with the masses. From the collapse of the non-co-operation movement to the collapse of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the League was out of touch with the masses. It was during this period that the League acted against the Congress. With the resumption of mass activities and the consequent differentiation of classes which was further aided by the crisis, the unity movement is becoming possible. Again unity is possible on the basis of struggle in action for the day-to-day demands of the masses of different faiths. The interests of the immense majority of the masses are identical. Organizations that have for their object the interests of the masses cannot but be united. Contact with the masses is the fruitful source of unity.

A good example of an organization in touch with the masses moving towards the unity of anti-imperialist forces is the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. Out of twenty-one seats reserved for Moslems the Conference party won nineteen seats, losing only two on technical grounds. Its programme has always been revolutionary and political. In their election speeches the members of this party told the electorate that "they stand for Responsible Government in which the power should rest with the representatives of the people rather than with the nominees of an absolute ruler." It is for this programme that the masses have given their support to this conference.

Kashmir is an Indian state ruled by a Hindu ruler. But a large majority of the population is Moslem. The Moslem peasants form the backbone of the state. Labourers and other poor sections of the people are also chiefly Moslems. The Muslim Conference began its activities with these masses. Very soon the vested Hindu interests began to oppose them. Even the poorer backward sections of the Hindus, still under

religious influence, joined these reactionary Hindu forces. The result was the Kashmir Moslems looked to the communalist Moslems in Punjab for support. The real political and economic issues were blurred by communal feelings. The reactionary Hindus took advantage of the communal name of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, and encouraged the idea that a conference communal in name cannot be 'nationalistic' in outlook.

Sheik Mohammed Abdullah, the leader of the Muslim Conference, was conscious of this vilification. He wanted to purify the party of outside influence. He wanted to bring all the progressive elements, whether Moslem or non Moslem, under the influence of the party. He made an impressive appeal to the non-Moslems to join the party. He assured the minority communities of all reasonable safeguards. He has been the president of the Conference four times, and he reiterated these assurances. The result was, Hindus and Sikhs came to work with him. Though technically they could not join the Muslim Conference, many Hindu and Sikh leaders have already been working since 1933 shoulder to shoulder with the members of the Muslim Conference Party.

'The main problem therefore now before us is,' said Sheik M. Abdullah on March 25, 1938, 'to organize joint action and a united front against the forces that stand in our way in the achievement of our goal of Responsible Government. This will require rechristening of our organization as a non-communal political body, and introducing certain consequent amendments in its constitution and its rules. We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslim and non-Muslim when discussing our political problems.'

True to his words, he convened a meeting of the Working Committee on June 28, 1938, and after a thorough discussion the following resolution was passed:

'Whereas in the opinion of the Working Committee the time has now come when all progressive forces in the country shall be rallied under one banner to fight for the achievement of Responsible Government, therefore the Working Committee recommends to the General Council in the forthcoming annual session of the Conference that the name and constitution of

the Conference be so altered and amended that such people who desire to participate in this political struggle may easily become members of the Conference irrespective of their caste, creed, or religion" It is now believed that the Muslim Conference will soon take rebirth as a National Conference¹ This brilliant lead from an Indian state should be followed all over India

Here is the new situation The Moslem masses are now being drawn into genuine anti-imperialist struggle The League, instead of leading those masses, has now become their tail-ender It passed radical resolutions to keep the anti-imperialist upsurge of the Moslem masses within the communal framework It has yet to prove its words by deeds The Congress, in seizing this situation and in opening up negotiations with the League, is eminently correct With an uncompromising stand against imperialism, without renouncing the right to approach the Moslem masses directly, the Congress asked the League to translate its Lucknow words into deeds This gesture of the Congress and the refusal of the League enhanced the prestige of the Congress amongst the masses The League is now on trial This development of the opposing forces is not confined to the Moslems alone It is seen in the other communities as well

A differentiation is going on in the ranks of the non-Brahmin movement The "lower" orders of society formulated their revolt against the "non-Brahmins" even as they did against the Brahmins. The movement has its right and progressive sections The right wing is represented by A P Patro. The All-India Movement of the non-Brahmins also has its progressive wing The movement as a whole has no connection with the masses In spite of the anti-Congress attitude of the movement, the majority of the Civil Disobedience prisoners in South India were reported to be non-Brahmins

At the All-India Depressed Classes Conference held on August 8, 1930, at Nagpur, Dr Ambedkar said. "It is only in a Swaraj Constitution that you stand any chance of getting into your own lands, without which you cannot bring salvation to your people" It is true that all communalist organizations

¹ *National Front*, vol 1, Nos 15, 17, 18, 22

have passed resolutions in favour of Swaraj. But this does not mean that there is no genuine anti-imperialist feeling among these classes. They realize that political freedom is a necessity in the interests of the Untouchables as of any other section of the people.

The Communal Award welded the Sikhs together into the anti-imperialist fold. They rejected the Award. Those who co-operated with the Simon Commission and the Round Table Conferences are now in opposition. With the exception of a few communalists the majority of the Sikhs are genuine anti-imperialists. The bulk of the anti-imperialist Sikh community is to be found among the agricultural tribes of Punjab. The communalists are to be found among urban trading and professional classes. The Sikh peasants are taking an increasing part in the peasant movement.

The Indian Christians also are awakening. The Parsees have always been the pioneers of the freedom movement in India.

The Anglo-Indians are also moving in that direction. Henry Derozio was the first prophet of a united India. Even the ambidextrous, communal, land-minded Gidney advises the community to treat the Indians as their kith and kin. On one occasion he said: 'But the community itself cannot afford to lead an isolated existence. Their interests are India's interests, and India's theirs. This being so, the Indian is your brother and you are his.'¹ 'The community must not drug themselves with reliance on statutory protection. They must also alter their political and social angles of vision.'² It is not difficult to reconcile his championship of communalism on one hand, and on the other cosmopolitanism. To combine communal radical phrases like the Muslim League is the characteristic of these classes. The identification of the interests of the community with those of India is a first step. It is a necessity. But it is not enough. The Anglo-Indian must realize that he cannot emancipate himself like the other communities, the Jews and the Armenians in India, without emancipating India from imperialist capitalist feudal exploitation. He must realize that

¹ *Anglo-Indian*, April 1934. Speech at the Dalhousie Institute on February 1, 1938.

Anglo-Indian, January 1936, p. 10.

the present gilt-edged security of employment is an illusion. It is consciously fostered by imperialism, which singles him out for favours, making him feel superior to the natives, and thus secures his allegiance. But the economic forces and the example of the struggles for freedom are making him change his attitude. He must realize that the prejudices existing among themselves are also successfully utilized by imperialism. He must realize that the community as a whole is used as a counterpoise against the "natives." He must realize that the main enemy is imperialism. He must therefore join the progressive anti-imperialist forces. He must not drug himself with the gilt-edged security of employment. Numerous representations have forced upon the Anglo-Indians the fact that they are natives of India, that their future lies in regarding themselves as members of one of the indigenous communities, without claims to special privileges. Gidney, "with his selfishness and vanity, his opportunism and theatrical effects, and his inability to direct his people towards a critical appreciation of social values and their future in a changing motherland," is out of date. "A police dog" of Britain in India cannot be their deliverer. Men like Derozio and Walker have already seen that. In the words of Cedric Dover, this preferential treatment and legislative protection "is fraught with grave danger, and the necessary adaptations can never be made in the Anglo-Indian spirit. *Protection, combined with higher and vocational education and feeble co-operative movements and colonization schemes, may water the branches, but leave the drought and the rot at the roots.*"

The Congress must welcome this progressive thought among Anglo-Indians. The lower middle sections and the poorer sections have not yet been blessed with gilt-edged securities. According to Gidney himself, "a third of the employable men of the community are unemployed, thousands more are in acute distress, and the majority barely subsist above what would be called in Europe the poverty line"¹. It is to these men that the Congress has to extend its hand and draw them into anti-imperialist activities. There are other reasons. The Congress must not forget the role played by the Anglo-Indian

¹ Cedric Dover, *Half-Caste*, Secker, Warburg, London, 1937, pp. 71, 134, 141, 142.

in the Mutiny. The employed Anglo-Indians are mostly in the strategic services like the postal telegraph and railway ones. They form three-fourths of the Indian Auxiliary Force. They have been used in the control of the Frontier unrest, the Mopla Rebellion, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the strike struggles. The hand of counterpoise is everywhere. It is to this section also that the Congress must stretch its hand.

The growth of the peasant movement during the last few years is another feature of anti-imperialist unity. Communal problem has no meaning for the masses. Their common interests against their exploiters draw together the peasantry of all faiths, Hindu, Sikh, or Moslem. The peasantry of Bengal, which is largely Moslem, is drawn into the struggle through Krishak Samities. The demand for the resignation of the Huq ministry was linked up with the demands of the Kisans. In other parts of India, notably in Bihar, Andhra, United Provinces, the Kisan Sabhas belonging to different faiths have been leading the day-to-day struggles of the peasants. The All-India Kisan Sabha has now a membership of 4½ lakhs. This movement is not only transcending religious frontiers, but also state frontiers. The whole peasantry in the Mangrol Taluka of the Baroda state, the tenant cultivators, and the Dublas and Halis are in revolt. We saw a similar movement in the state of Kashmir. The significance of the present struggle in Mangrol lies in the unity between the tenant farmers (Raniparaj) and the serf-labourers (Dublas and Halis). The various strands of the peasant movement are at present united in the All-India Kisan Sabha. The changes brought about by capitalism and the economic crisis are driving the peasants to their natural allies the workers and, at the present stage, the Congress.

The importance of the Cawnpore strikes of 1938 cannot be overlooked. *This is the first occasion upon which the Congress has rallied in full and active support of the strike action of a section of the working class. The Congress accepted the strike struggles as part of the national struggles.*

The anti-imperialist activity could also be noted among the tribal masses. The Civil Disobedience Movement found its echo among them. Imperialism, while strengthening the parasitic

feudal elements among them, still further conditioned their historic backwardness. It is out of this very backwardness that they are emerging into anti-imperialist activity. The Congress at Fazipur has already stretched its hand to these tribal masses. By drawing these masses into anti-imperialist activities the Congress will be challenging the major premise of imperialism, the territorial policy of counterpoise.

The development of the opposing forces is also seen in the Indian states. They are brought into the Federation as a territorial counterpoise against the progressive forces. Today within the states a movement is arising for freedom and civil liberties. Mysore, Travancore, and Cochin are leading the way. There are already fifteen Congress Committees in various Indian states. In the light of the growing movement of freedom within the states the Congress resolution at Haripura, which leaves the development of political struggles in the states to themselves, looks out of date. The Working Committee which met at Wardha July 1938 congratulated the peoples of the states for their successful struggles for rights, but did not think it fit to co-ordinate and lead the struggles. The states are allies of imperialism. The struggle against imperialism is also a struggle for the rights of the peoples in the states against their autocratic rulers, who are used as a counterpoise against progressive forces. In order to put an end to the policy of counterpoise and to struggle against imperialism, the Congress must draw the masses of the states into the orbit of anti-imperialist struggle. It must revise its decision at Haripura regarding the Indian states.

While the peoples of the states are struggling for political rights, the communalists in the states are demanding protection. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in his evidence before the Joint Committee, told that the communal tensions were spreading to the Indian states. Sir Samuel Hoare observed that the absence of communal tensions on a large scale was due to the absence of reforms in the Indian states. Today, with the growth of the reform movement in the states, the virus of communalism has invaded the Indian states. The growth and differentiation of the middle classes in the states is a factor which coincided with the liberalization of administration in states. In Mysore,

the All Mysore State Muslim League is dependent on the Maharaja, as the Moslem League is dependent on imperialism in British India. The Mysore Muslim League believes in reforms by stages, and reminds the Maharaja that the Mysoreans do not yet possess sufficient experience in the art of good government. But it sees no harm in clearly defining the goal of political progress in the state as the attainment of full responsible government *under the aegis of the Maharaja, by stages, within a reasonable time*. Recent communal developments in Hyderabad caused the state authorities much concern. Addressing the Hyderabad State Legislative Council, June 12, 1938, Sir Akbar Hydari uttered a stern and timely warning against communalist activities. He emphasized that the stirring up of communal strife cannot accelerate political progress, and would definitely retard advance. He characterized communal activity as 'a crime against society'. Even in the states we see a struggle between communal and anti-communal forces.

We have seen how imperialism profited by the split in the Trade Union movement. The formal unity achieved at present is a welcome sign. The Congress must utilize this unity.

The student and youth movements also reflected the political trends of the day. Like their political prototypes, they also went through a phase of struggles and unity has been achieved for anti-imperialist struggle.

Opposition to Gandhism of 1932-1934 took another shape. Out of the ashes of the Swarajist party, phoenix like, rose the Congress Socialist Party. It emerged out of a phase of acute struggles within and outside the Congress in 1934. The Working Committee of the Congress in its resolution on June 18, 1934, while welcoming the group within the Congress, condemned its socialism. The Congress socialists are by no means homogeneous. Within their ranks are noticeable antagonisms of various shades. In spite of the fact that their theoretical outlook is confused and eclectic, they are taking part in the struggles for anti imperialist unity.

Just as the non-co-operation movement produced the Swarajya Party, the Responsivist Party, the Independent Party, and the Congress-Socialist Party, so also the Civil Disobedience Movement produced the Democratic Swarajya

Party in Bombay, and the Swarajya Party in Madras. These movements were faint imitations of the original Swarajya Party, and chose as their banner constitutionalism. Always dissensions on the eve and after reforms—such is the law of Congress politics. It is inherent in its class-structure. In spite of these backward trends the Congress has already achieved the growing unity of the Indian people on the basis of anti-imperialist struggle.

Just as the struggles within the Congress produced the Congress Socialist Party, the struggles for the Trade Union Movement produced the Communist Party. The industrial situation in India gave an impetus to the development of this party. Born in 1924, brought into prominence by the Cawnpore conspiracy case of 1924 and the Meerut trial of 1929, it is going strong. In July 1934 it was declared illegal by an ordinance of the Governor-General. It also underwent an acute phase of class struggles in its struggles against the Congress, against Royism, against Trotskyist versions of some of our Congress Socialists, in its struggles for a united National Front against imperialism.

This growth of left unity for independence and democracy is a feature of our period. It is also noticeable in the provinces. The unity between the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress Party, the unity between the Congress Socialists, Communists, and all genuine anti-imperialists is another feature of this period.

Such is the development of the opposing forces of India, the unity of communalism, and reaction with increasing dependence on imperialism on one hand, and the unity of anti-imperialist forces on the other. It is to these anti-imperialist forces that the Congress should address itself.

Unity is desired not at any price. It must be on the basis of consistent struggle against imperialism. A struggle against imperialism is inseparable from a struggle against communalism. The Congress pledged itself for a democratic solution of the question by the communities concerned, but never openly and straightforwardly condemned communal representation. The Congress must come against it boldly. Communalists dependent on imperialism would not and could not fight

against it. The sharpening of struggle against imperialism is only possible with the differentiation of classes and the consequent alignment of class forces. The Moslem masses, the Moslem Congressites, the Moslem youths and students, and the progressive sections of other so-called communities are willing to fight against imperialism. The communalists are not. They are the reactionary allies of imperialism. Therefore the Congress must rally the progressive anti imperialist forces as allies against imperialism and its reactionary communalist and other allies. Will the Congress do it? Will it galvanize this stream of anti imperialist thought into an organized resistance? The right wing leaders of the Congress are already alarmed at the rapid strides of the peasant movement. Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad already expressed themselves against the Kisan Sabhas. The Congress ministries have already broken their election pledges to the peasants. Nowhere has the Congress, except in the United Provinces, called upon the peasants to demonstrate in favour of its tenancy legislation, and against the reactionary vested interests who are opposing it. In Bihar the Congress has arrived at an agreement with the Zamindars twice, over the heads of the Kisans, and each time has surrendered the interests of the Kisans to the blackmailing Zamindars.

Kisan Sabhas are necessary to strengthen the Congress itself. The unity of the Kisans and workers with the Congress is imperative for the overthrow of imperialism. The spearheads of the Congress are the workers and peasants. In order to achieve the broadest unity the Congress must champion the day-to-day demands of the workers and peasants.

The resolution on the mass contact committee passed at Lucknow Congress is already a dead one. The Congress must translate this word into deed. In one of his speeches at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931 Gandhi said "The Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from British India, or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions, and so you find now and again apparently a clash between

several interests, and if there is a genuine real clash, I have no hesitation in saying, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interest of these dumb millions " Good words, but where are the deeds? The distinction between British India and Indian India was once again affirmed at the Haripura Congress in 1938 It was Gandhi who was responsible for it ¹ By translating these words into deeds the Congress will broaden its base against imperialism The tasks of the communists, socialists, trade unionists, peasants, workers, and all genuine anti-imperialists are clear to transform the Congress into a central fighting mass organization against imperialism

The communists have added responsibilities They have advocated and striven for uncompromising opposition to imperialism, and its attempts to impose the new Constitution and the federal scheme They have pressed for adoption by the Congress of the immediate demands of the people, for the slogan of the constituent assembly, for the broadening and democratization of the Congress They have sought to draw into the Congress the organizations of the workers and peasants in order to present to imperialism a united front of all the anti-imperialist forces in India, and in order to strengthen these forces for the effort against the Constitution and imperialism

Today the Congress has adopted the slogan of the Constituent Assembly as the united democratic demand of the Indian people Today the Congress raises the demand for civil liberties and the demand for the immediate relief to the workers

¹ It is Gandhi again who declared in a recent article in the *Haryan* "With the growing influence of the Congress it is impossible for me to defend it (the policy of non-interference) in the face of injustice perpetrated in the states If the Congress feels that it has power to offer effective interference it will be bound to do so when the call comes so " Within a year Gandhi has to admit the failure of the Haripura resolution on Indian states Since the Haripura Congress the struggles of the people in the states have become widespread Sardar Patel declared at the Rajkot People's Conference that the entire country and the Indian National Congress would be with the Rajkot people in their fight for the establishment of responsible government In spite of the reaffirmation of the policy of non-intervention in Indian states, by the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee, events and individual leaders are moving so fast in the direction of political leadership of the state struggles by the Congress that the Haripura resolution is becoming a dead letter

and peasants, although it has not redeemed its pledges. Today the Congress recognizes the right of the workers and peasants to organize themselves in their class organizations, and permits Congressmen to participate in this work. The communists are today the foremost workers for the United National Front against imperialism.¹ They do not isolate themselves from the national anti-imperialist struggle. They are transforming the growing unity already achieved by the Congress into a United National Front against imperialism.

In the recent Cawnpore strikes of 1938 the communists have played an increasing role through the Mazdoor Sabha. They achieved concretely ideological, political, and organizational leadership in the Sabha. They won the leadership by means of systematic and unselfish practical work. The elections of the Mazdoor Sabha executive committee and office-bearers held on August 21, 1938, show a complete rout of the right wing party led by Mr. Harihar Nath Shastri. Out of the nineteen office-holders elected by the general council the communists swept nearly all the offices, and a few went to their allies. In the executive council of the Sabha as constituted now, the communists number twenty and the opponents ten. In the co-option of members to the General Council, Muslim League representatives—Hakim Kamaluddin and Hazrat Mohani—have been elected with three other nominees of the communists. The astonishing victory of communists over their opponents is entirely attributed to the strong support of the Moslems, who now found representation on the Sabha's key offices. This is a gesture to the leftward trend of the League in Cawnpore. For the first time the communists have shown successfully how to win leadership of the masses by beginning with the political struggle for their immediate demands.

Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto*:

"The theoretical conclusions of the communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

"They merely express, in general terms, actual relations, springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.

¹ *National Front*, March 6, 1938, p. 3.

"The communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

"They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole

"They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which^o to shape and mould the proletarian movement. . . .

"The communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement. . . ." Communists must always be with the masses and at the head of the masses As Maurice Thorez writes quoting Lenin. "It is not even enough to keep abreast of it, but that our place is in front, in front, but only a step"¹

The resolution of the seventh World Congress of the Communist International directs "To draw the widest masses into the national liberation movement against growing imperialist exploitation, against cruel enslavement, for the driving out of the imperialists, for the independence of the country; to take an active part in the mass anti-imperialist movements headed by the national reformists, and strive to bring about joint action with the national revolutionary and national reformist organizations on the basis of a definite anti-imperialist platform"

The Indian communists must consolidate all the genuine anti-imperialist forces of the country, broadening and leading the struggle of the masses against the imperialist oppressors² The central task of the communists in India today is to push and further all anti-imperialist forces into one united National Front against imperialism

"Carry on work amongst the masses"

"Build up the United National Front against imperialism"

¹ Maurice Thorez, *Son of the People*, translation by Douglas Garman, with an introduction by Harry Pollitt Lawrence Wishart, London, 1938, p 40

² Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries*, see section India, pp 29-32

The Present Phase of the Problem

1935-1938

WHAT was the attitude of the Congress towards the Communal Award? Its attitude was weak and temporizing. It was indecisive. The Working Committee in its sessions at Bombay, June 17-18, 1934, passed a long resolution on the White Paper and the Communal Award. "The only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper is a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage, or as near it as possible, with the power, if necessary, to the important minorities to have their representatives elected exclusively by the electors belonging to such minorities. The White Paper lapsing, the Communal Award must lapse automatically. Among other things, it will be the duty of the Constituent Assembly to determine the method of representation of important minorities and make provision for otherwise safeguarding their interests. The Congress claims to represent

equally all the communities composing the Indian nation, and therefore, in view of the division of opinion, can neither accept nor reject the Communal Award as the division of opinion lasts.

No solution that is not purely national can be propounded by the Congress. But the Congress is pledged to accept any solution falling short of the national, which is agreed to by all the parties concerned, and, conversely, to reject any solution which is not agreed to by any of the said parties." The first part of the resolution is politically correct. The solution is to be referred to the Constituent Assembly. If the Congress is willing to submit the problems to the Assembly there is no need for the Congress to take a neutral attitude on this question. The correct political position would have been to reject boldly the Award. Because it was not agreed to by all the parties. It was not the work of all the parties.

concerned. It was imposed on them by imperialism. Certain phrases in the resolution are confusing. What does the Working Committee mean by the phrase "All communities composing the Indian nation"? Is the word "community" used in the same sense as the Government of India uses it? Does it mean a religious community? Do "all communities" mean all religious groups? Would religious groups be considered minorities? Or is it used in the sense of a "historical community" or "nation"?

What does the Working Committee mean by "Indian nation"? Is India a nation? Would it not have been better to say "India" instead of "Indian nation"? Would it not have been better to say "'historical communities' or 'nations' and 'national minorities' that are in India?" These phrases are as vague as those used by the Government of India.

In spite of these drawbacks the Working Committee was right in suggesting the reference of the matter to the Constituent Assembly.

This decision of the Committee was questioned by the Nationalist Party. The opposition to the Communal Award came from political reactionaries. So the matter came up for discussion before the Working Committee which met at Patna in December 1934. The Working Committee recorded that the policy of the Congress was the same as before. The policy of the Congress broadly is to get the Award altered in co-operation with, and with the goodwill of, the communities concerned.

We next come to the presidential speech of Jawaharlal Nehru at the forty-ninth session of the Congress held in April 1936 at Lucknow. He declared his opposition to the communal decision. He said "It seeks to divide India into numerous separate compartments, chiefly on a religious basis, and this makes the development of democracy and economic policy very difficult. Indeed the communal decision and democracy can never go together." On another occasion he said "It is a negation of our fundamental principles of democracy and of a united India. It is incompatible with freedom." He told the Congress that the communal demands have nothing whatever to do with the problems of the masses. He showed the connection between communalists and political reactionaries and their dependence on imperialism. With all these liberal sentiments

he said "But to make a necessary exception in favour of our Muslim or Sikh friends is one thing, to spread this evil principle to numerous other groups, and thus to divide up the electoral machinery and legislature into many compartments is a far more dangerous proposition." It is in this way we have seen throughout the last quarter of the century that communalism came to stand. Why should there be a necessary exception to Moslems and Sikhs? Is it because that the majority community must show generosity in the matter to allay the fear and suspicion that minorities, even though unreasonably, might have? What circumstances are there to cause such fear and suspicion? No one is in real power yet. The powers we possess at present are circumscribed by imperialism, and are not and were not used for coercing minorities. The fears and suspicions are unfounded and unreasonable. Ignoring this point, and for other reasons we discussed before, the claims of the Moslems were recognized. This started the ball rolling, spreading it to all other religious groups. Therefore the exception in favour of our Moslem and Sikh friends is not necessary.

Nehru further said at the same Congress "We have to admit that, under present circumstances, and so long as our politics are dominated by middle-class elements, we cannot do away with communalism. Even if our politics were dominated by other classes or by masses there will still be communalists, careerists, political reactionaries, and dependents on imperialism. Communalism, as we have throughout stressed, is the product of the imperialist-capitalist feudal structure. It is the compounded amalgam of traders in politics with imperialism. To say that we cannot do away with communalism amounts to saying that we cannot do away with imperialism. Yes, we cannot do away with it *now*, until we have the mighty support of the masses and other allies, but nevertheless we continue the struggle against imperialism. It is the same with communalism. We continue the struggle against it. But if imperialism steps in and imposes communal decision, as it did, we have no other alternative but to struggle against imperialism, which also means a struggle against communalism. We confront imperialism everywhere, even if we turn our face to the masses. The communalists cannot emancipate themselves without

emancipating India from imperialism. As long as their politics are a reflex of imperialism, we cannot do away with communalism unless we do away with imperialism.

The All-India Congress Committee in its election manifesto of August 1936 once again condemned the communal decision. "It is unacceptable as being inconsistent with independence and the principles of democracy. It encourages fissiparous and disruptive tendencies. It hinders the normal growth and consideration of economic and social questions. It is a barrier to national progress, and strikes at the root of Indian unity." So ran the manifesto. Therefore "the attitude of the Congress . . . is not one of indifference or neutrality. . . . It disapproves strongly of the communal decision, and would like to end it. But the Congress has repeatedly laid stress on the fact that a satisfactory solution of the communal question can come only through the goodwill and co-operation of the principal communities concerned. An attempt by one group to get some communal favour from the British Government at the expense of another group results in an increase of communal tension and the exploitation of both groups by the Government. Such a policy does not fit in with the struggle for independence. It does not pay either party in the long run. It sidetracks the main issue . . ."

"The Congress therefore holds that the right way to deal with the situation created by the communal decision is to intensify our struggle for independence, and at the same time to seek a common basis for an agreed solution which helps to strengthen the unity of India. It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole communal problem, in spite of its importance, had nothing to do with the major problems of India, poverty, and widespread unemployment. It is not a religious problem, and it affects only a handful of people at the top. The peasantry, the workers, the traders and merchants, and the lower middle class of all communities are in no way touched by it, and their burdens remain."

This is the best political statement on the communal question by the Congress. It advanced a great deal politically since the session at Bombay. The formula of "neither accepting nor rejecting" is dead. The rejection of the Federation means

inevitably the rejection of the Communal Award. The Congress wisely insisted on the struggle for independence and the desire to seek a common basis for an agreed solution, as the only solution of the problem. But nowhere had it declared boldly against communal representation. On the other hand, the election manifesto stated "The effort of one community might well result in confirming and consolidating the decision, for conflict between the two produces the very situation which gives the Government a chance of enforcing such a decision. The Congress thus is of opinion that such one-sided agitation can bear no useful result." The Congress has shown here its centrist, temporizing, weak character. Principles triumph. They do not get reconciled. A common basis for an agreed solution cannot be the work of one community. Anti-imperialist and anti-communal forces are not from one particular community. An agreed solution will be a collective one isolating imperialism and communalist reactionaries. Conflict is inevitable between imperialism and its reactionary allies on one hand and the anti-imperialist, anti-communal forces on the other. There can never be a perfect equilibrium of forces against imperialism as long as different classes have different interests. They align themselves with their respective forces according to the situation of the day. In isolating imperialism, we will also be isolating its allies, communalists and political reactionaries. There cannot be a struggle against pure imperialism alone. It has its parasitic roots in the country. It has its dependents. Therefore a struggle against imperialism is inconceivable without a struggle against its allies. In the present case its allies are communalists, careerists. To avoid a conflict with them and to wait for a harmony is as good as waiting for the Greek Calends. A bold stand against communal representation will strengthen the Congress. The Congress has "already achieved the growing unity of the Indian people on the basis of a programme which corresponds to the needs of the overwhelming majority of our people, and also to the present stage of our anti-imperialist struggle. The struggle against communalists will only be against a few sections of the middle classes belonging to different faiths. The bourgeoisie, the bulk of the lower middle-class workers, peasants, and

students are all with us. Under these circumstances a stand against communal representation cannot be "onesided agitation" A satisfactory solution of the communal question cannot come through the "goodwill and co-operation of the principal communities concerned" It will come only on the basis of struggle 'Interests triumph' They do not get reconciled

The working committee in its session at Calcutta in October 1937 passed a resolution on Minority rights The Haripura session of the fifty-first Congress in February 1938 approved and confirmed the Calcutta decision It resolved. "The Congress welcomes the growth of anti-imperialist feeling among the Moslems and other minorities in India, and the growing unity of all classes and communities in India in the struggle for India's independence, which is essentially one and indivisible, and can only be carried on effectively on a united national basis In particular the Congress welcomes the large number of members of the minority communities who have joined the Congress during the last year and given their support to the struggle for freedom and the ending of the exploitation of India's masses The Congress . . declares afresh that it regards as its primary duty and fundamental policy to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural, and other rights of the minorities in India so as to ensure for them in any scheme of government to which the Congress is a party the widest scope for their development and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic, and cultural life of the nation"¹

At the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 minority rights were defined in the Fundamental Rights resolution This was varied by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in August 1931 This is still the basis of the Congress policy The Congress declared that the fundamental and basic rights of all Indians must contain provisions for the free exercise of religion, for freedom of conscience, for the protection of the culture, language, and script of minorities It declared that all citizens, whatever their religion or caste or sex, were equal before the law, and in regard to public employment,

¹ See also the Presidential Address of S. C. Bose, Fifty-first Indian National Congress, Haripura, February 19, 1938, pp. 5-8

office, trade, or calling. It declared that the franchise must be on the basis of universal and adult suffrage.

In both the resolutions on the Fundamental Rights and the constituent Assembly the Congress subscribed to the principle of universal and adult suffrage, and not to the communal principle. The acceptance of the resolutions on Fundamental Rights and the Constituent Assembly means also the rejection of the principle of communal representation. If such is the case the Congress must come forward against communal representation. At this stage to come forward against it means to strengthen the forces against imperialism, to draw the masses under religious influence into the orbit of anti-imperialist struggle on the basis of showing the masses the connection between communalism and imperialism, and to isolate all those careerists and political reactionaries dependent on imperialism. The demand for the abolition of communal representation does not mean that the Congress does not desire a democratic solution of the question. It has pledged itself to the hilt in various resolutions.¹ Such a democratic solution is not possible until the overthrow of imperialism.

The Congress has shown extreme patience and moderation to the communalists. The Congress is willing to concede all communal demands of the Moslem reactionaries. The Congress asked the League no more than to translate its resolution on Independence into action. The League spurned the hand of solidarity. It is drifting towards separatism and particularism. Under these changed circumstances created by the differentiation of classes in the League, the offer to grant all demands of the communalist minority in order to secure unity is meaningless. A communalist independence is as much of an anachronism as socialist Zionism. We cannot have socialism within Zionism. We cannot have independence within communalism. Both are incompatible. The demands of the minority are those of the careerists, not of the masses. They do not wait till the overthrow of imperialism, when they could get their spoils from imperialism at present. A bird in the hand of these communalists is worth two in the bush. They would cling to

¹ See Indian National Congress Report of the General Secretary January 1937 to February 1938 pp. 27-30.

imperialism, unless at the last minute, when they see the imminent fall of imperialism, they come to join the anti-imperialist forces. Unity is on the basis of struggle against imperialism, and all those who depend on imperialism. The Congress must declare for the abolition of communal representation. The Congress must rally the anti-imperialist forces

The Congress has to take into account the growth of the mass movements and the class differentiation they have caused in various organizations. In United Provinces, in Sind and in Bengal the Moslem masses are drawn into the anti-imperialist struggle. Many of them have deserted the Muslim League and joined the Congress. It is this change in the situation that the Congress has to take notice of. The masses are being isolated from religious-political influences by means of their day-to-day struggles. In order to further widen this isolation and secure the support of the masses the Congress must make its mass-contact committee a reality. With this change in the radicalization of the masses and the consequent differentiation of classes, the Congress must also change its policy.

It is true that the political differentiation in the League has just begun, and has not reached a sufficiently advanced stage. It is also true that the Moslem masses have only just found their real allies and friends, and have not yet shed their religious influences. We have seen how the Moslem peasants in Kashmir on account of the pressure of the Hindu reactionaries fell on the support of the Moslem communalists in Punjab. We have seen how some of the Moslem peasants of Bengal followed Huq, who exploited their religion. Politically progressive, and yet under religious influence, such is the nature of the awakening masses. The Congress must take these circumstances into consideration. The activities of the Cawnpore Mazdoor Sabha show how to win the communalist masses to the progressive cause. But this does not mean that the Congress must concede communal demands at any price. It must hasten and accelerate this differentiation of the Moslem classes and masses.

Too long has the Congress stretched its hand to the commun-

alists Too long have the communalists been on trial, failing to put their words into deeds Too high a time it is to declare against communal representation This means the organization of the national front of the Indian people to fight for Independence and Democracy

The National Question in U.S.S.R.:

Conclusion

THE only solution to this problem is the abolition of communal representation as in Ceylon. In Ceylon, communal representation was abolished without endangering imperialism. In India, imperialism is determined with the aid of the communalists to enforce communal decisions, as in the case of the Communal Award. Until the role played by the policy of counterpoise is shifted to other directions, imperialism will retain communal representation. As long as this connection exists the struggle for the abolition of communal representation is inseparable from the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism. The present stage of the anti-imperialist struggle is centred around gathering all the genuine anti-imperialist forces into a mighty United National Front against imperialism.

"I wish," wrote Lord Cromer, "the younger generation of Englishmen would read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the history of the Indian Mutiny, it abounds in lessons and warnings"¹. The imperialists read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the Mutiny. They mastered its lessons and warnings. The whole British policy in India dates its dual character from the Mutiny. The greatest apparatus of tyranny, oppression, and exploitation in history evolved from this date. The imperialists remembered the role of the loyal Moslems, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, and the princes. They rewarded them. In the epoch of imperialism they used them for counterpoising purposes. The Indian has not yet learnt the lessons of the Mutiny. The greatest lesson from the Mutiny that an Indian can draw today is unity and a disciplined centralized organization of the forces against imperialism. The forces of unity are growing. It is out of these very communities that the opposing forces against imperialism and communalism are

¹ Lord Cromer, *Imperialism Ancient and Modern*, p. 124

emerging The Congress must rally these progressive forces, as imperialism rallies the reactionary communalist forces The Congress must widen its front, stretch its hand to the Anglo-Indians, to the peoples in the states, to the tribal masses, and to all classes and masses The only elementary condition for a broad united national front is a consistent genuine struggle against imperialism

In our critique of the principle of communities, classes, and interests, we pointed out continually that imperialism confounded religious adherents or groups with "nations" or "historical communities" ¹ Even if it were to discover the real "nations" and "National minorities," the purpose of its policy will be to incite nations against each other From a policy of general oppression imperialism passes to a policy of inciting nations against each other We have already seen its real motive in the creation of Sind Province. The main motive in creating the Province of Sind is a military one Karachi is the nearest Indian seaport to London In the event of disturbances troops could be landed in Karachi earlier than in Bombay It is also the nearest aerial port to England Therefore it is desirable from the point of administrative and military efficiency to separate Sind from Bombay Presidency At the same time it satisfies the demand of the Sindhi Moslem professional classes. At the same time it is a counterpoise against the Hindi professional classes Concession, counterpoise, and strengthening of paramountcy are so indissolubly connected It is in this triad of British policy, that the origins of the creation of the separate province of Sind lie

It is the same with Orissa By the creation of this new province the essential postulate of British policy, strengthening of paramountcy, is not impaired It is an act of administrative convenience. It is the cheapest concession to the Oriyan professional classes and Zamindars It is not without counterpoise elements in future, in the necessary balancing of interests between the Oriyan professional classes and the Zamindars Therefore under imperialism the general oppression is further followed by inciting "nations" against each other Self-deter-

¹ This will be discussed in detail in my forthcoming book, *The National Question in India*.

mination of nations is possible only with a break with imperialism.

Out of the struggles between the backward and the advanced professional classes on the question of communal representation emerged the idea of redistribution of provinces on linguistic, cultural, and historical lines. The proposals of Sir Geoffrey Corbett and Sardar U Singh at the Second Round Table Conference were all tainted with communalism. Corbett proposed the separation of Ambala division from Punjab. The result of this, he thought, would facilitate Moslem majority in Punjab minus Ambala division. The Moslems liked this scheme, but the Sikhs rejected it. Singh also presented a scheme of redistribution of Punjab on the lines of Corbett. Both these schemes came out of communal discussions. Both did not touch the question of the general situation of India and imperialism. Both were designed as bargaining values for the selfish ends of communalists. A plus here and a minus there under imperialism will not solve the national question. This movement for redistribution of provinces under imperialism represents only the emergence of professional classes in the various historical communities or "nations," and their struggles for political spoils. As such, imperialism under the *status quo* incites the professional class of one nation against another. Here is an example. In their minute of dissent to the report of the Indian Central Committee, Ali Khan and Suhrawardy wrote "If Sind, Punjab, Bengal, North-West Frontier Province, and Baluchistan have their own Governments, which would necessarily be Moslem in character, with the rest of the Indian provinces having Hindu Governments, it will create a *balance of power* in India which is highly desirable"¹

Even if imperialism were overthrown the problem of overcoming the social forces which give rise to careerism or communalism has to be faced. It is here that socialism presents itself as the solution of the problem. Democracy presents itself as inseparable from socialism. It is here that the struggle against the Indian capitalists and feudalists begins. The question of nationality is inseparable from existence. It is a subsidiary problem of the social revolution. It could not be

¹ Report of the Indian Central Committee, Minute of Dissent, p. 206

dealt with in isolation from the questions of the domination of capital, the fight against imperialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore it is obvious, as Stalin said, that "the liberation of the masses of the oppressed nationalities and the abolition of national oppression are inconceivable without a break with imperialism, without overthrowing 'one's own' national bourgeoisie, and without the seizure of power by the toiling masses themselves"¹ Not until then do we have the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of India. At present the questions are centred round anti-imperialist struggles.

A good example is U S S R, where the principle of communities, classes, and interests works out differently. For centuries the Tsars oppressed the conquered and subjected nations. The tsarist Government incited one people against another, Russians against Jews, Tartars against Armenians. It fostered enmity among the non Russian nationalities, engineered Jewish pogroms, Armenian massacres, and bloody brutalities against the working masses of oppressed nationalities. It kept the oppressed peoples in a state of ignorance and degradation. It deliberately held back the economic development of the national areas of old Russia in order to keep them economically dependent on the Russian landlords and capitalists. It used every means in its power to prevent the cultural development of the oppressed peoples. It encouraged the priests who doped the masses. It hindered the development of all other branches of the life of the oppressed nationalities. It was what Lenin called "a prison of nations."

Today the U S S R. is a great family of Soviet nations, what Barbusse called "a constellation of nations." After the seizure of power in 1917, Lenin and Stalin tackled the problem of nationalities. Stalin is the best theoretician on the national question. After the revolution he became the head of the Peoples' Commissariat for nationality questions. He announced the nationality policy of the Soviet Union in the declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia on November 16, 1917. This declaration laid down the following basic principles: Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, their right to full self-determination, including secession from Russia.

¹ J. Stalin, *The October Revolution*, p. 11.

and setting up as independent states, the abrogation of all privileges and disabilities of nationalities and national religions, freedom of development of national minorities and ethnical groups in Russian territory

Having become convinced that the Soviet Government had destroyed the old national oppression, and that it would defend the interests of the working masses and the oppressed nationalities, the workers and peasants of the nations began to establish mutual ties of friendship and co-operation. Their ties were further cemented in the course of the common struggle against the White guard armies and foreign imperialists. Thus the nations arrived at the idea of forming a single union of soviet republics. At a Congress of Soviet Socialist Republics held in December 1922 the nations all concluded a treaty by which they joined to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The first All-Union Congress of Soviets approved the declaration and agreements drawn up by Stalin which formed the basis of the constitution of 1924. The present constitution further consolidates legislatively the gains made since then.¹

Today U S S R. consists of eleven republics. The new constitution describes U S S R. as a federated state formed on the basis of the voluntary association of Soviet Socialist Republics possessing equal rights. The equality of nations, the equality of races in all spheres of economic, state, cultural and social political life of the country is an irrevocable law in the Soviet Union. The equality of nations is further guaranteed in the Council of Nationalities with the Council of the Union. Fifty-four different nationalities are represented in the council of nationalities.

Under Stalin's nationality policy, the productive forces of the national republics have rapidly developed. The republics have been covered with a network of railways. The industrial development of the republics is proceeding by giant strides. The agriculture of the national republics has also made great

¹ Article 123 states "The equality of the rights of citizens of the U S S R irrespective of their nationality or race in all fields of economic, state, cultural, social and political life is an irrevocable law." To interfere with these rights in any way is punishable by law.

progress. This has ushered in a life of prosperity for the formerly oppressed and downtrodden masses of the Uralist colonies. Cultural development has made rapid progress in all the national republics. Education is developing on broad lines. Many of the peoples acquired their alphabets in Soviet times. All the national republics and regions have their steadily growing press and literature. Stalin said "We now have a fully formed multi national socialist state which has stood all tests, and the stability of which might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world".¹

The policy of the Soviet Union towards the tribal masses is also noteworthy. There are about twenty six different tribes in the north of Asia. Very little was known about them till the Soviet Government discovered them. The Soviets are very anxious to avoid being charged with Russifying even the smallest national minority. Their languages and cultures are encouraged. The method of education now adopted is gradual and free. The Northern Institute in Leningrad looks after these people. Russian scientists have created alphabets for them. They are based on the Latin not the Russian script. The main principle applied in the campaign to raise the Arctic tribes is to get it done as far as possible by the tribes themselves. Cultural bases are established at various centres. The law protects them from exploitation. Great efforts are made to stimulate artistic activity among these people. Smolka writes "A kind of pride and joy at the variety of colours and nationalities of the country has been established. The feeling of being rich in different national cultures, languages, arts, and customs, from Arctic to sub tropical, from Far Eastern to European, is imbued in the Youth. It has become more than a political dogma for the very large masses in Russia to regard the different races in the Union as brothers".² What a contrast is this to the tribal policy of imperialism in India? In the Soviet Union there are mutually friendly classes of workers, collective farmers, and intellectuals, united by the common cause of the

¹ Quoted in *Our Country* edited by A. Stetsky, S. Ingulov and N. Baransky, Moscow, 1937, p. 55; see also pp. 49-72.

² H. P. Smolka, *Forty Thousand Against the Arctic Russia's Polar Empire*, London 1937, p. 114; see also pp. 102-33.

construction of Communism. They do not fight each other for power. Their interests are not antagonistic. They triumph under socialism. They are the State, and there is none to set one interest against another, one class against another.

Thus the national question in the Soviet Union was solved only after a break with Tsarism, only after a break with the Russian bourgeoisie and their reactionary allies and only after the seizure of power by the toiling masses. All these gains that we just noted are possible in a land of socialism, but not in a colony of imperialism. The freedom from national oppression and exploitation and the freedom for oppressed nationalities cannot be won abstractly. They cannot be isolated at the present stage from a struggle against imperialism. Therefore the only solution is to demand independence for India from British imperialism. The demand for the abolition of communal representation is inseparable from a demand for independence. But independence is not a gift. It has to be organized and striven for! The present organizational and political form of the struggle for independence is the building up of a United National Front against imperialism.

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